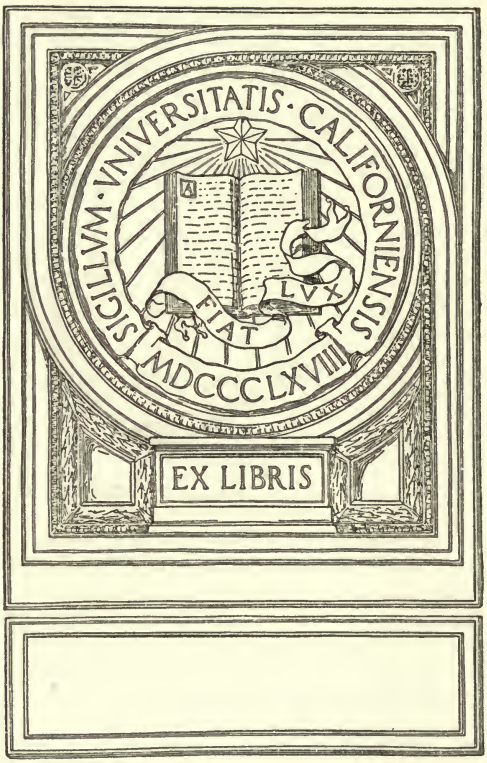
In The Three Zones

F. J. Stimson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In the Three Zones

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By F. J. Stimson (J. S. of Dale)

Dr. Materialismus. His Hypothesis Worked Out
An Alabama Courtship. Its Simplicities and its Complexities
Los Caraqueños. Being the Life History of Don Sebastian Marques del Torre and of Dolores, his wife, Condesa de Luna

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DR. MATERIALISMUS

HIS HYPOTHESIS WORKED OUT

I SHOULD like some time to tell how Tetherby came to his end; he, too, was a victim of materialism, as his father had been before him; but when he died, he left this story, addressed among his papers to me; and I am sure he meant that all the world (or such part of it as cares to think) should know it. He had told it, or partly told it, to us before; in fragments, in suggestions, in those midnight talks that earnest young men still have in college, or had, in 1870.

Tetherby came from that strange, cold, Maine coast, washed in its fjords and beaches by a clear, cold sea, which brings it fogs of winter but never haze of summer; where men eat little, think much, drink only water, and yet live intense lives; where the village people, in their long winters away from the world, in an age of revivals had their waves of atheism, and would transform, in those days, their pine meeting-houses into Shakspere clubs, and logically make a cult of

infidelity; now, with railways, I suppose all that has ceased; they read Shakspere as little as the scriptures, and the Sunday newspaper replaces both. Such a story—such an imagination—as Tetherby's, could not happen now—perhaps. But they take life earnestly in that remote, ardent province; they think coldly; and, when you least expect it, there comes in their lives, so hard and sharp and practical, a burst of passion.

He came to Newbridge to study law, and soon developed a strange faculty for debate. The first peculiarity was his name—which first appeared and was always spelled, C. S. J. J. Tetherby in the catalogue, despite the practice, which was to spell one's name in full. Of course, speculation was rife as to the meaning of this portentous array of initials; and soon, after his way of talk was known, arose a popular belief that they stood for nothing less than Charles Stuart Jean Jacques. Nothing less would justify the intense leaning of his mind, radical as it was, for all that was mystical, ideal, old. But afterwards we learned that he had been so named by his curious father, Colonel Sir John Jones, after a supposed loyalist ancestor, who had

flourished in the time of the Revolution, and had gone to Maine to get away from it; Tetherby's father being evidently under the impression that the two titles formed a component part of the ancestor's identity.

Rousseau Tetherby, as he continued to be called, was a tall, thin, broad-shouldered fellow, of great muscular strength and yet with feeble health, given to hallucinations and morbid imaginations which he would recount to you in that deep monotone of twang that seemed only fit to sell a horse in. The boys made fun of Tetherby; he bore it with a splendid smile and a twinkle in his ice-blue eye, until one day it went too far, and then he tackled the last offender and chucked him off the boat-house float into the river. He would have rowed upon the university crew, but that his digestion gave out; strong as he was in mind and body, nothing, that went for the nutrition and fostering of life, was well with him. Such men as he are repellent to the sane, and are willed by the world to die alone.

Some one on that night, I remember, had said something derogatory about Goethe's theory of colors. A dry subject, an abstruse

subject, a useless subject — as one might think — but it roused Tetherby to sudden fury. He made a vehement defence of the great poet-philosopher against the dry, barren mathematics of the Newtonian science.

"Do you cipherers think all that is is reducible to numbers? to so many beats per second, like your own dry hearts? Sound may be nothing but a quicker rattle—is it but a rattle, the music in your souls? If light is but the impact of more rapid molecules, does MAN bring nothing else, when he worships the glory of the dawn? You say, tones are a few thousand beats per second, and colors a few billion beats per second—what becomes of all the numbers left between? If colored lights count all these billions, up from red to violet, and white light is the sum of all the colors, what can be its number but infinity? But is a white light GOD? Or would you cipherers make of God a cipher? Smoke looks yellow against the sky, and blue against the forest—but how can its *number* change? You, who make all to a number, as governments do to convicts in a prison! I tell you, this rage for machinery will bear Dead Sea fruit. You con-

found man's highest emotions with the tickling of the gray matter in his brain; that way lies death and suicide of the soul——"

We stared; we thought he had gone crazy.

"Goethe and Dante still know more about this universe than any cipherer," he said, more calmly. And then he told us this story; we fancied it a nightmare, or a morbid dream; but earnestly he told it, and slowly, surely, he won our hearts at least to some believing in the terror of the tale.

When he was through, we parted, with few words, thinking poor Tetherby mad. But when he died it was found among his papers, addressed to me. Materialism had conquered him, but not subdued him; "say not the struggle naught availed him" though he left but this one tract behind. It is only as a sermon that it needs preserving, though the story of poor Althea Hardy was, I believe, in all essentials true.

I was born and lived, until I came to this university, in a small town in Maine. My father was a graduate of B—— College, and had never wholly dissolved his connection with that place; probably because he was

there not unfavorably known to more acquaintances, and better people, than he elsewhere found. The town is one of those gentle-mannered, ferocious-minded, white wooden villages, common to Maine; with two churches, a brick town-hall, a stucco lyceum, a narrow railway station, and a spacious burying-ground. It is divided into two classes of society: one which institutes church-sociables, church-dances, church-sleighing parties; which twice a week, and critically, listens to a long and ultra-Protestant, almost mundane, essay-sermon; and which comes to town with, and takes social position from, pastoral letters of introduction, that are dated in other places and exhibited like marriage certificates. I have known the husbands at times get their business employments on the strength of such encyclicals (but the ventures of these were not rarely attended with financial disaster, as passports only hinder honest travellers); the other class falling rather into Shakespeare clubs, intensely free-thinking, but calling Sabbath Sunday, and pretending to the slightly higher social position of the two. This is Maine, as I knew it; it may have changed since. Both

classes were in general Prohibitionists, but the latter had wine to drink at home.

In this town were many girls with pretty faces; there, under that cold, concise sky of the North, they grew up; their intellects preternaturally acute, their nervous systems strung to breaking pitch, their physical growth so backward that at twenty their figures would be flat. We were intimate with them in a mental fellowship. Not that we boys of twenty did not have our preferences, but they were preferences of mere companionship; so that the magnanimous confidence of English America was justified; and anyone of us could be alone with her he preferred from morn to midnight, if he chose, and no one be the wiser or the worse. But there was one exceptional girl in B——, Althea Hardy. Her father was a rich shipbuilder; and his father, a sea-captain, had married her grandmother in Catania, island of Sicily. With Althea Hardy, I think, I was in love.

In the winter of my second year at college there came to town a certain Dr. Materialismus—a German professor, scientist, socialist —ostensibly seeking employment as a Ger-

man instructor at the college ; practising hypnotism, magnetism, mesmerism, and mysticism ; giving lectures on Hegel, believing in Hartmann, and in the indestructibility of matter and the destructibility of the soul ; and his soul was a damned one, and he cared not for the loss of it.

Not that I knew this, then ; I also was fascinated by him, I suppose. There was something so bold about his intellectuality, that excited my admiration. Althea and I used to dispute about it ; she said she did not like the man. In my enthusiasm, I raved to her of him ; and then, I suppose, I talked to him of her more than I should have done. Mind you, I had no thought of marriage then ; nor, of course, of love. Althea was my most intimate friend—as a boy might have been. Sex differences were fused in the clear flame of the intellect. And B—— College itself was a co-educational institution.

The first time they met was at a coasting party ; on a night of glittering cold, when the sky was dusty azure and the stars burned like blue fires. I had a double-runner, with Althea ; and I asked the professor to come with us, as he was unused to the sport, and I

feared lest he should be laughed at. I, of course, sat in front and steered the sled; then came Althea; then he; and it was his duty to steady her, his hands upon her waist.

We went down three times with no word spoken. The girls upon the other sleds would cry with exultation as they sped down the long hill; but Althea was silent. On the long walk up—it was nearly a mile—the professor and I talked; but I remember only one thing he said. Pointing to a singularly red star, he told us that two worlds were burning there, with people in them; they had lately rushed together, and, from planets, had become one burning sun. I asked him how he knew; it was all chemistry, he said. Althea said, how terrible it was to think of such a day of judgment on that quiet night; and he laughed a little, in his silent way, and said she was rather too late with her pity, for it had all happened some eighty years ago. "I don't see that you cry for Marie Antoinette," he said; "but that red ray you see left the star in 1789."

We left Althea at her home, and the professor asked me down to his. He lived in a

strange place; the upper floor of a warehouse, upon a business street, low down in the town, above the Kennebec. He told me that he had hired it for the power; and I remembered to have noticed there a sign "To Let—One Floor, with Power." And sure enough, below the loud rush of the river, and the crushing noise made by the cakes of ice that passed over the falls, was a pulsing tremor in the house, more striking than a noise; and in the loft of his strange apartment rushed an endless band of leather, swift and silent. "It's furnished by the river," he said, "and not by steam. I thought it might be useful for some physical experiments."

The upper floor, which the doctor had rented, consisted mainly of a long loft for manufacturing, and a square room beyond it, formerly the counting-room. We had passed through the loft first (through which ran the spinning leather band), and I had noticed a forest of glass rods along the wall, but massed together like the pipes of an organ, and opposite them a row of steel bars like levers. "A mere physical experiment," said the doctor, as we sank into couches covered with

white fur, in his inner apartment. Strangely disguised, the room in the old factory loft, hung with silk and furs, glittering with glass and gilding; there was no mirror, however, but, in front of me, one large picture. It represented a fainting anchorite, wan and yellow beneath his single sheepskin cloak, his eyes closing, the crucifix he was bearing just fallen in the desert sand; supporting him, the arms of a beautiful woman, roseate with perfect health, with laughing, red lips, and bold eyes resting on his wearied lids. I never had seen such a room; it realized what I had fancied of those sensuous, evil Trianons of the older and corrupt world. And yet I looked upon this picture; and as I looked, some tremor in the air, some evil influence in that place, dissolved all my intellect in wild desire.

"You admire the picture?" said Materialismus. "I painted it; she was my model." I am conscious to-day that I looked at him with a jealous envy, like some hungry beast. I had never seen such a woman. He laughed silently, and going to the wall touched what I supposed to be a bell. Suddenly my feelings changed.

"Your Althea Hardy," went on the doctor, "who is she?"

"She is not *my* Althea Hardy," I replied, with an indignation that I then supposed unreasoning. "She is the daughter of a retired sea-captain, and I see her because she alone can rank me in the class. Our minds are sympathetic. And Miss Hardy has a noble soul."

"She has a fair body," answered he; "of that much we are sure."

I cast a fierce look upon the man; my eye followed his to that picture on the wall; and some false shame kept me foolishly silent. I should have spoken then. . . . But many such fair carrion must strew the path of so lordly a vulture as this doctor was; unlucky if they thought (as he knew better) that aught of soul they bore entangled in their flesh.

"You do not strain a morbid consciousness about a chemical reaction," said he. "Two atoms rush together to make a world, or burn one, as we saw last night; it may be pleasure or it may be pain; conscious organs choose the former."

My distaste for the man was such that I

hurried away, and went to sleep with a strange sadness, in the mood in which, as I suppose, believers pray; but that I was none. Dr. Materialismus had had a plum-colored velvet smoking-jacket on, with a red fez (he was a sort of beau), and I dreamed of it all night, and of the rushing leather band, and of the grinding of the ice in the river. Something made me keep my visit secret from Althea; an evil something, as I think it now.

The following day we had a lecture on light. It was one in a course in physics, or natural philosophy, as it was called in B—— College; just as they called Scotch psychology "Mental Philosophy," with capital letters; it was an archaic little place, and it was the first course that the German doctor had prevailed upon the college government to assign to him. The students sat at desks, ranged around the lecture platform, the floor of the hall being a concentric inclined plane; and Althea Hardy's desk was next to mine. Materialismus began with a brief sketch of the theory of sound; how it consisted in vibrations of the air, the coarsest medium of space, but could not dwell in ether; and

how slow beats—blows of a hammer, for instance — had no more complex intellectual effect, but were mere consecutive noises; how the human organism ceased to detect these consecutive noises at about eight per second, until they reappeared at sixteen per second, the lowest tone which can be heard; and how, at something like thirty-two thousand per second these vibrations ceased to be heard, and were supposed unintelligible to humanity, being neither sound nor light —despite their rapid movement, dark and silent. But was all this energy wasted to mankind? Adverting one moment to the molecular, or rather mathematical, theory—first propounded by Democritus, re-established by Leibnitz, and never since denied—that the universe, both of mind and matter, body and soul, was made merely by innumerable, infinitesimal points of motion, endlessly gyrating among themselves—mere points, devoid of materiality, devoid also of soul, but each a centre of a certain force, which scientists entitle *gravitation*, philosophers deem *will*, and poets name *love*—he went on to Light. Light is a subtler emotion (he remarked here that he used the word *emotion* advisedly, as all emo-

tions alike were, in substance, the subjective result of merely material motion). Light is a subtler emotion, dwelling in ether, but still nothing but a regular continuity of motion or molecular impact; to speak more plainly, successive beats or vibrations reappear intelligible to humanity as light, at something like 483,000,000,000 beats per second in the red ray. More exactly still, they appear first as *heat;* then as red, orange, yellow, all the colors of the spectrum, until they disappear again, through the violet ray, at something like 727,000,000,000 beats per second in the so-called chemical rays. "After that," he closed, "they are supposed unknown. The higher vibrations are supposed unintelligible to man, just as he fancies there is no more subtle medium than his (already hypothetical) ether. It is possible," said Materialismus, speaking in italics and looking at Althea, "*that these higher, almost infinitely rapid vibrations may be what are called the higher emotions or passions—like religion, love and hate—dwelling in a still more subtle, but yet material, medium, that poets and churches have picturesquely termed heart, conscience, soul.*" As he said this I too looked at Al-

thea. I saw her bosom heaving; her lips were parted, and a faint rose was in her face. How womanly she was growing!

From that time I felt a certain fierceness against this German doctor. He had a way of patronizing me, of treating me as a man might treat some promising school-boy, while his manner to Althea was that of an equal—or a man of the world's to a favored lady. It was customary for the professors in B—— College to give little entertainments to their classes once in the winter; these usually took the form of tea-parties; but when it came to the doctor's turn, he gave a sleighing party to the neighboring city of A——, where we had an elaborate banquet at the principal hotel, with champagne to drink; and returned driving down the frozen river, the ice of which Dr. Mismus (for so we called him for short) had had tested for the occasion. The probable expense of this entertainment was discussed in the little town for many weeks after, and was by some estimated as high as two hundred dollars. The professor had hired, besides the large boat-sleigh, many single sleighs, in one of which he had returned, leading the way, and driving with

Althea Hardy. It was then I determined to speak to her about her growing intimacy with this man.

I had to wait many weeks for an opportunity. Our winter sports at B—— used to end with a grand evening skating party on the Kennebec. Bonfires were built on the river, the safe mile or two above the falls was roped in with lines of Chinese lanterns, and a supper of hot oysters and coffee was provided at the big central fire. It was the fixed law of the place that the companion invited by any boy was to remain indisputably his for the evening. No second man would ever venture to join himself to a couple who were skating together on that night. I had asked Althea many weeks ahead to skate with me, and she had consented. The Doctor Materialismus knew this.

I, too, saw him nearly every day. He seemed to be fond of my company; of playing chess with me, or discussing metaphysics. Sometimes Althea was present at these arguments, in which I always took the idealistic side. But the little college had only armed me with Bain and Locke and Mill; and it may be imagined what a poor defence

I could make with these against the German doctor, with his volumes of metaphysical realism and his knowledge of what Spinoza, Kant, Schopenhauer, and other defenders of us from the flesh could say on my side. Nevertheless, I sometimes appeared to have my victories. Althea was judge; and one day I well remember, when we were discussing the localization of emotion or of volition in the brain:

"Prove to me, if you may, even that every thought and hope and feeling of mankind is accompanied always by the same change in the same part of the cerebral tissue!" cried I. "Yet that physical change *is* not the soul-passion, but the effect of it upon the body; the mere trace in the brain of its passage, like the furrow of a ship upon the sea." And I looked at Althea, who smiled upon me.

"But if," said the doctor, "by the physical movement I produce the psychical passion? by the change of the brain-atoms *cause* the act of will? by a mere bit of glass-and-iron mechanism set *first* in motion, I make the prayer, or thought, or love, *follow*, in plain succession, to the machine's movement, on

every soul that comes within its sphere — will you then say that the metaphor of ship and wake is a good one, when it is the wake that *precedes* the ship?"

"No," said I, smiling.

"Then come to my house to-night," said the doctor; "unless," he added with a sneer, "you are afraid to take such risks before your skating party." And then I saw Althea's lips grow bloodless, and my heart swelled within me.

"I will come," I muttered, without a smile.

"When?" said the professor.

"Now."

Althea suddenly ran between us. "You will not hurt him?" she said, appealingly to him. "Remember, oh, remember what he has before him!" And here Althea burst into a passion of weeping, and I looked in wild bewilderment from her to him.

"I vill go," said the doctor to me. "I vill leafe you to gonsole her." He spoke in his stronger German accent, and as he went out he beckoned me to the door. His sneer was now a leer, and he said:

"I vould kiss her there, if I vere you."

I slammed the door in his face, and when

I turned back to Althea her passion of tears had not ceased, and her beautiful bright hair lay in masses over the poor, shabby desk. I did kiss her, on her soft face where the tears were. I did not dare to kiss her lips, though I think I could have done it before I had known this doctor. She checked her tears at once.

"Now I must go to the doctor's," I said. "Don't be afraid; he can do me or my soul no harm; and remember to-morrow night." I saw Althea's lips blanch again at this; but she looked at me with dry eyes, and I left her.

The winter evening was already dark, and as I went down the streets toward the river I heard the crushing of the ice over the falls. The old street where the doctor lived was quite deserted. Trade had been there in the old days, but now was nothing. Yet in the silence, coming along, I heard the whirr of steam, or, at least, the clanking of machinery and whirling wheels.

I toiled up the crazy staircase. The doctor was already in his room—in the same purple velvet he had worn before. On his study table was a smoking supper.

"I hope," he said, "you have not supped on the way?"

"I have not," I said. Our supper at our college table consisted of tea and cold meat and pie. The doctor's was of oysters, sweetbreads, and wine. After it he gave me an imported cigar, and I sat in his reclining-chair and listened to him. I remember that this chair reminded me, as I sat there, of a dentist's chair; and I good-naturedly wondered what operations he might perform on me—I helpless, passive with his tobacco and his wine.

"Now I am ready," said he. And he opened the door that led from his study into the old warehouse-room, and I saw him touch one of the steel levers opposite the rows of glass rods. "You see," he said, "my mechanism is a simple one. With all these rods of different lengths, and the almost infinite speed of revolution that I am able to gif them with the power that comes from the river applied through a chain of belted wheels, is a rosined leather tongue, like that of a music-box or the bow of a violin, touching each one; and so I get any number of beats per second that I will." (He always said *will*, this man, and never *wish*.)

"Now, listen," he whispered; and I saw him bend down another lever in the laboratory, and there came a grand bass note—a tone I have heard since only in 32-foot organ pipes. "Now, you see, it is Sound." And he placed his hand, as he spoke, upon a small crank or governor; and, as he turned it slowly, note by note the sound grew higher. In the other room I could see one immense wheel, revolving in an endless leather band, with the power that was furnished by the Kennebec, and as each sound rose clear, I saw the wheel turn faster.

Note by note the tones increased in pitch, clear and elemental. I listened, recumbent. There was a marvellous fascination in the strong production of those simple tones.

"You see I hafe no overtones," I heard the doctor say. "All is simple, because it is mechanism. It is the exact reproduction of the requisite mathematical number. I hafe many hundreds of rods of glass, and then the leather band can go so fast as I will, and the tongue acts upon them like the bow upon the violin."

I listened, I was still at peace; all this I could understand, though the notes came

strangely clear. Undoubtedly, to get a definite finite number of beats per second was a mere question of mathematics. Empirically, we have always done it, with tuning-forks, organ-pipes, bells.

He was in the middle of the scale already; faster whirled that distant wheel, and the intense tone struck C in alt. I felt a yearning for some harmony; that terrible, simple, single tone was so elemental, so savage; it racked my nerves and strained them to unison, like the rosined bow drawn close against the violin-string itself. It grew intensely shrill; fearfully, piercingly shrill; shrill to the rending-point of the tympanum; and then came silence.

I looked. In the dusk of the adjoining warehouse the huge wheel was whirling more rapidly than ever.

The German professor gazed into my eyes, his own were bright with triumph, on his lips a curl of cynicism. "Now," he said, "you will have what you call emotions. But, first, I must bind you close."

I shrugged my shoulders amiably, smiling with what at the time I thought contempt, while he deftly took a soft white rope and

bound me many times to his chair. But the rope was very strong, and I now saw that the frame-work of the chair was of iron. And even while he bound me, I started as if from a sleep, and became conscious of the dull whirring caused by the powerful machinery that abode within the house, and suddenly a great rage came over me.

I, fool, and this man! I swelled and strained at the soft white ropes that bound me, but in vain. . . . By God, I could have killed him then and there! . . . And he looked at me and grinned, twisting his face to fit his crooked soul. I strained at the ropes, and I think one of them slipped a bit, for his face blanched; and then I saw him go into the other room and press the last lever back a little, and it seemed to me the wheel revolved more slowly.

Then, in a moment, all was peace again, and it was as if I heard a low, sweet sound, only that there was no sound, but something like what you might dream the music of the spheres to be. He came to my chair again and unbound me.

My momentary passion had vanished. "Light your cigar," he said, "it has gone

out." I did so. I had a strange, restful feeling, as of being at one with the world, a sense of peace, between the peace of death and that of sleep.

"This," he said, "is the pulse of the world; and it is Sleep. You remember, in the Nibelung-saga, when Erda, the Earth spirit, is invoked, unwillingly she appears, and then she says, *Lass mich schlafen*—let me sleep on—to Wotan, king of the gods? Some of the old myths are true enough, though not the Christian ones, most always. . . . This pulse of the earth seems to you dead silence, yet the beats are pulsing thousands a second faster than the highest sound. . . . For emotions are subtler things than sound, as you sentimental ones would say; you poets that talk of 'heart' and 'soul.' We men of science say it this way: That those bodily organs that answer to your myth of a soul are but more widely framed, more nicely textured, so as to respond to the impact of a greater number of movements in the second."

While he was speaking he had gone into the other room, and was bending the lever down once more; I flew at his throat. But even before I reached him my motive

changed; seizing a Spanish knife that was on the table, I sought to plunge it in my breast. But, with a quick stroke of the elbow, as if he had been prepared for the attempt, he dashed the knife from my hand to the floor, and I sank in despair back into his arm-chair.

"Yes-s," said he, with a sort of hiss of content like a long-drawn sigh of relief. "Yes-s-s—I haf put my mechanik quickly through the Murder-motif without binding you again, after I had put it back to sleep."

"What do you mean?" I said, languidly. How could I ever hope to win Althea away from this man's wiles?

"When man's consciousness awakes from the sleep of the world, its first motive is Murder," said he; "you remember the Hebrew myth of Cain?" and he laughed silently. "Its next is Suicide; its third, Despair. This time I have put my mechanik quickly through the Murder movement, so your wish to kill me was just now but momentary."

There was an evil gleam in his eye as he said this.

"I leafe a dagger on the table, because if I left a pistol the subject would fire it, and

that makes noise. Then at the motion of Suicide you tried to kill yourself: the suicide is one grade higher than the murderer. And now, you are in Despair."

He bent the lever further down and touched a small glass rod.

"And now, I will gife to you—I alone—all the emotions of which humanity is capable."

How much time followed, I know not; nor whether it was not all a dream, only that a dream can hardly be more vivid—as this was—than my life itself. First, a nightmare came of evil passions; after murder and suicide and despair came revenge, envy, hatred, greed of money, greed of power, lust. I say "came," for each one came on me with all the force the worst of men can feel. Had I been free, in some other place, I should inexorably have committed the crimes these evil passions breed, and there was always some pretext of a cause. Now it was revenge on Materialismus himself for his winning of Althea Hardy; now it was envy of his powers, or greed of his possessions; and then my roving eye fell on that strange picture of his I mentioned before; the face of the woman now seemed to be Althea's. In a glance all the

poetry, all the sympathy of my mind or soul that I thought bound me to her had vanished, and in their place I only knew desire. The doctor's leer seemed to read my thoughts; he let the lever stay long at this speed, and then he put it back again to that strange rhythm of Sleep.

"So—I must rest you a little between times," he said. "Is my fine poet convinced?"

But I was silent, and he turned another wheel.

"All these are only evil passions," said I, "there may well be something physical in them."

"Poh—I can gife you just so well the others," he sneered. "I tell you why I do not gife you all at once——"

"You can produce lust," I answered, "but not love."

"Poh—it takes but a little greater speed. What you call love is but the multiple of lust and cosmic love, that is, gravitation."

I stared at the man.

"It is quite as I say. About two hundred thousand vibrations make in man's cerebrum what you call lust; about four billion per sec-

ond, that is gravitation, make what the philosophers call will, the poets, cosmic love; this comes just after light, white light, which is the sum of all the lights. And their multiple again, of love and light, makes many sextillions, and that is love of God, what the priests name religion." . . . I think I grew faint, for he said, "You must hafe some refreshments, or you cannot bear it."

He broke some raw eggs in a glass, in some sherry, and placed it by my side, and I saw him bend the lever much farther.

"Perhaps," I spoke out, then, "you can create the emotion, or the mental existence—whatever you call it—of God himself." I spoke with scorn, for my mind was clearer than ever.

"I can—almost," he muttered. "Just now I have turned the rhythm to the thought millions, which lie above what you call evil passions, between them and what you call the good ones. It is all a mere question of degree. In the eye of science all are the same; morally, one is alike so good as the other. Only motion—that is life; and slower, slower, that is nearer death; and life is good, and death is evil."

"But I can have these thoughts without your machinery," said I.

"Yes," said he, "and I can cause them with it; that proves they are mechanical. Now, the rhythm is on the intellectual-process movement; hence you argue."

Millions of thoughts, fancies, inspirations, flashed through my brain as he left me to busy himself with other levers. How long this time lasted I again knew not; but it seemed that I passed through all the experience of human life. Then suddenly my thinking ceased, and I became conscious only of a bad odor by my side. This was followed in a moment by an intense scarlet light.

"Just so," he said, as if he had noted my expression; "it is the eggs in your glass, they altered when we passed through the chemical rays; they will now be rotten." And he took the glass and threw it out the window. "It was altered as we passed through the spectrum by no other process than the brain thinks."

He had darkened the room, but the light changed from red through orange, yellow, green, blue, violet; then, after a moment's darkness, it began again, more glorious than

before. White, white it was now, most glorious; it flooded the old warehouse, and the shadows rolled from the dark places in my soul. And close on the light followed Hope again; hope of life, of myself, of the world, of Althea.

"Hope—it is the first of the motions you call virtuous," came his sibilant voice, but I heeded him not. For even as he spoke my soul was lifted unto Faith, and I knew that this man lied.

"I can do but one thing more," said he, "and that is—Love."

"I thought," said I, "you could make communion with the Deity."

"And so I could," he cried, angrily, "so I could; but I must first give my glass rod an infinite rotation; the number of vibrations in a second must be a number which is a multiple of *all* other numbers, however great; for that even my great fly-wheel must have an infinite speed. Ah, your 'loft with power' does not give me that. . . . But it would be only an idea if I could do that too, nothing but a rhythmic motion in your brain." . . .

Then my faith rose well above this idle

chatter. But I kept silence; for again my soul had passed out of the ken of this German doctor. Althea I saw; Althea in the dark room before me; Althea, and I had communion with her soul. Then I knew indeed that I did love her.

The ecstasy of that moment knew no time; it may have been a minute or an hour, as we mortals measure it; it was but an eternity of bliss to me. . . . Then followed again faith and hope, and then I awoke and saw the room all radiant with the calm of that white light—the light that Dante saw so near to God.

But it changed again to violet, like the glacier's cave, blue like the heavens, yellow like the day; then faded through the scarlet into night.

Again I was in a sea of thoughts and phantasies; the inspiration of a Shakespeare, the fancy of a Mozart or a Titian, the study of a Newton, all in turn were mine. And then my evil dreams began. Through lust to greed of power, then to avarice, hatred, envy, and revenge, my soul was driven like a leaf before the autumn wind.

Then I rose and flew at his throat once more. "Thou liest!" I cried. "Heed not

the rabble's cry—God lies NOT in a rotting egg!"

I remember no more.

When I regained consciousness it was a winter twilight, and the room was cold. I was alone in the doctor's study and the machinery in the house was stilled. . . . I went to the eastern window and saw that the twilight was not the twilight of the dawn. I I must have slept all day. . . . As I turned back I saw a folded paper on the table, and read, in the doctor's hand:

"In six hours you have passed through all the thoughts, all the wills, and all the passions known to devils, men, or angels. You must now sleep deeply or you die. I have put the lever on the rhythm of the world, which is Sleep.

"In twelve hours I shall stop it, and you will wake.

"Then you had better go home and seek your finite sleep, or I have known men lose their mind."

I staggered out into the street, and sought my room. My head was still dizzy, my

brain felt tired, and my soul was sere. I felt like an old man; and yet my heart was still half-drunk with sleep, and enamoured with it, entranced with that profound slumber of the world to which all consciousness comes as a sorrow.

The night was intensely cold; the stars were like blue fires; a heavy ox-sledge went by me, creaking in the snow. It was a fine night for the river. I suddenly remembered that it must be the night for the skating party, and my engagement with Althea. And with her there came a memory of that love that I had felt for her, sublimated, as it had been, beyond all earthly love.

I hurried back to my room; and as I lit the lamp I saw a note addressed to me, in her handwriting, lying on my study table. I opened it; all it contained was in two phrases:

"Good-by; forgive me.

"ALTHEA."

I knew not what to think; but my heart worked quicker than my brain. It led me to Althea's house; the old lady with whom she lived told me that she had already started for

the skating party. Already? I did not dare to ask with whom. It was a breach of custom that augured darkly, her not waiting for me, her escort.

On my way to the river I took the street by the house of Materialismus. They were not there. The old warehouse was dark in all its windows. I went in; the crazy wooden building was trembling with the Power; but all was dark and silent but the slow beating of the Power on the Murder pulse.

I snatched up the Spanish dagger where it still lay on the table, and rushed out of that devil's workshop and along the silent street to the river. Far up the stream I could already make out a rosy glow, the fires and lanterns of the skating party. I had no skates, but ran out upon the river in a straight line, just skirting the brink of the falls where the full flood maned itself and arched downward, steady, to its dissolution in the mist. I came to the place of pleasure, marked out by gay lines of paper lanterns; the people spoke to me, and some laughed, as I threaded my way through them; but I heeded not; they swerving and darting

about me, like so many butterflies, I keeping to my line. By the time I had traversed the illuminated enclosure I had seen all who were in it. Althea was not among them.

I reached the farthest lantern, and looked out. The white river stretched broad away under the black sky, faintly mirroring large, solemn stars. It took a moment for my eyes, dazzled by the tawdry light, to get used to the quiet starlight; but then I fancied that I saw two figures, skating side by side, far up the river. They were well over to the eastern shore, skating up stream; a mile or more above them the road to A—— crossed the river, in a long covered bridge.

I knew that they were making for that road, where the doctor doubtless had a sleigh in waiting. By crossing diagonally, I could, perhaps, cut them off.

"Lend me your skates," I said to a friend who had come up and stood looking at me curiously. Before he well understood, I had torn them off his feet and fitted them to my own; and I remember that to save time I cut his ankle-strap off with the Spanish knife. A moment more and I was speeding up the silent river, with no light but the

stars, and no guide but the two figures that were slowly creeping up in the shadow of the shore. I laughed aloud; I knew this German beau was no match for me in speed or strength. I did not throw the knife away, for I meant more silent and more certain punishment than a naked blow could give. The Murder motive still was in my brain.

I do not know when they first knew that I was coming. But I soon saw them hurrying, as if from fear; at least her strokes were feeble, and he seemed to be urging, or dragging her on. By the side of the river, hitched to the last post of the bridge, I could see a single horse and sleigh.

But I shouted with delight, for I was already almost even with them, and could easily dash across to the shore while they were landing. I kept to my straight line; I was now below the last pier of the bridge; and then I heard a laugh from him, answering my shout. Between me and the bank was a long open channel of rippling dark water, leading up and down, many miles, from beneath the last section of the bridge.

They had reached the shore, and he was dragging her, half reluctant, up the bank.

In a minute, and he would have reached his horse.

I put the knife between my teeth and plunged in. In a few strokes of swimming I was across; but the ice was shelving on the other side, and brittle; and the strong stream had a tendency to drag me under. I got my elbows on the edge of ice, and it broke. Again I got my arms upon the shelving ice; it broke again. I heard a wild cry from Althea—I cursed him—and I knew no more.

. . . . . .

When I next knew life, it was spring; and I saw the lilac buds leafing by my window in the garden. I had been saved by the others —some of them had followed me up the river—unconscious, they told me, the dagger still clinched in my hand.

Althea I have never seen again. First I heard that she had married him; but then, after some years, came a rumor that she had not married him. Her father lost his fortune in a vain search for her, and died. After many years, she returned, alone. She lives, her beauty faded, in the old place.

AN ALABAMA COURTSHIP

ITS SIMPLICITIES AND ITS COMPLEXITIES

1.

I MUST first tell you how I came to be ever a commercial traveller. My father was a Higginbotham—one of the Higginbothams of Salem—but my mother, Marie Lawrence, was a far-off cousin of the wife of old Thomas Lawrence, the great tobacconist of New York. Horatio Higginbotham was both an author and an artist, but he neither wrote nor painted down to the popular taste; and as he was also a gentleman, and had lived like one, he left very little money. Not that he took it with him when he died, but he had spent it on the way. It costs considerable to get through this world, if you travel first-class and pay as you go. And, at least, my father left no debts.

He left my dear mother, however, and his assets were represented by me, an expensive Junior at Newbridge. And as none of the family counting-rooms and cotton-mills

seemed to open the door for me—so degenerate a scion of a money-making race as to have already an artist behind him—I was glad to enter the wide portal of Cousin Lawrence's tobacco manufactory.

Here, as in most successful trades, you were, all but the very heir-presumptive, put through a regular mill. First, a year or two in the factory, just to get used to the sneezing; and then you took to the road; and after a few years of this had thoroughly taught you the retail trade, you were promoted to be a gentleman and hob-nob with the planters in Cuba, and ride over their landed estates.

I got through the factory well enough; but the road, as you may fancy, was a trial in prospect. When my time came (being then, as you will see, something of a snob) I was careful to choose the wildest circuit, most remote from Boston and from Boston ways. The extreme West—Denver, Kansas City, Omaha—was out of the question; even the South—New Orleans, Charleston, Florida particularly—was unsafe. Indiana was barbarous enough, but went with Ohio and Michigan; and I finally chose what was

called the Tennessee Circuit, which included all the country west of the Alleghanies, from the Ohio River to the Gulf States. Louisville belonged to my Cincinnati colleague, but the rest of Kentucky and Tennessee, from the Cumberland and Great Smoky Mountains to the hills of Alabama and the plains of Memphis, were mine.

And by no means uninteresting I found it. I travelled, you must know, in snuff; and the Southern mountains, with the headwaters of the Western rivers, Cumberland, Alabama, Tennessee, are the country of the snuff-taker in America.

The civilization, the picturesqueness of our country lies always between the mountains and the seaboard. Trace the Appalachian summits from their first uprearing at Tracadiegash or Gaspé, to that last laurel-hill near Tupelo in Mississippi—on the left of you lies history, character, local identity; on the right that great common place, that vast central prairie, lying stolidly spread out between the Rockies and the Blue Ridge, producing food. Heaven keep us above that central plain, one would say, and from the men and moods and motives that it breeds

—but that out of it, in the very unidentified middle of it, the Lord upreared a Lincoln.

However, my beat lay so well to the south of it, lurked so far up in the mountain alley-ways and southern river-cañons, that I found much to study and more to see. The railway did little more than take me to the field of labor; the saddle or the wagon or the country stage must do the rest. My first trip was to the east of my dominions; my headquarters were at Knoxville, and from there I rode through some thousand miles of mountain and of cove; and different enough and remote enough it was from all that I had known before, and from all that might know me or look askance upon a travelling-merchant selling snuff by sample. But this was but a breather, as it were; and on my second journey I was ordered to replace my predecessor, Jerry Sullivan, at his headquarters in Chattanooga, and take entire charge of that country. Already I had contracted a prejudice for the slow and unconventional modes of travelling; and after I had seen Jerry Sullivan, a genial Irishman, and had formal delivery of his office, and he had gone back with evident delight to his beloved New

York, and I had sat there alone a day or two, I thought that I would open out the business westward. And looking at the map, it occurred to me that the Tennessee River was the natural avenue to my domains in that direction. Luckily, I made the acquaintance of a young land-prospector, with romantic instincts like my own; and the second evening after this idea came to me he and I were seated in a wooden dug-out canoe, my parcels of samples and his instruments in the waist of the boat, drifting swiftly down the brown stream at sunset, under the lofty shadow of the Lookout Mountain.

The stream was shallow, and its waters so opaque that six inches looked like six fathoms, and it happened not rarely that we ran upon a sand-bar in full mid-stream; but a hard shove at the pole would send us off, usually sideways, careening in the swirl. When we were not aground our time was rapid—some six or seven miles an hour, with the current, and the pole, and paddle. The mountains came close around us, and the shores contracted; and pretty soon the railway took a plunge into a tunnel and disappeared. No house nor light was in sight

when the moon came out. For some twenty miles or more we swung down the swift stream silently, in a country that seemed quite unsettled. And as the night made it still harder to make out the deeper places, it is not surprising that after one long, gradual grate upon a mid-channel sand-bank, we settled in a bed that all our efforts were insufficient to dislodge us from. And Arthur Coe, my companion, by way of making the best night of it possible, and the moon and the mild May weather falling in, drew out a banjo from his traps in the bow and made melodies not unpleasant to a man who lay silent in the stern, looking at the stars and smoking his pipe.

A fine range of trees lined the opposite shore and, beyond, the forest rolled up in mountain-shoulders to the sky; but not a sign of human life was visible. So that we both started when, at the end of some negro melody, the refrain was taken up by a lusty chorus, and rang far out over the murmuring Tennessee. And in a few moments a large gum canoe filled with joyous darkies came to us from the farther shore; and finding our trouble, nothing would do but they must pull

us ashore and we spend the night with "Massa." Which we did, and a kind and queer old pair of gentry we found them, him and his wife, living alone with a dozen of old freed slaves, some dozen miles from anywhere. The old, wide, one-story plantation house stood in a clearing facing the river (which used to be much more of a river, with many steamers and cotton-craft, "befo' de wo'"); and we had quite a concert before we went to bed, with all the cigars and other accompaniment that we needed. There were no young people in the house, only old massa and missus and the old slaves; and we heard some story of death in battle from the latter, as we all sang a hymn together before we went to bed, and took one final glass of whiskey; and even the negroes were allowed a taste of something, for wetting their whistles they had blown so well.

Thus it was, almost every night; and the long days were spent in drifting down the river; and even Coe was in no hurry to get to the place where he was to survey his railway or prospect his town; and either the people were so lonely, or their good will was so great, that they gave orders for snuff in

a way that was surprising. Only one thing struck us—the absence of young people; not only of young men, but of girls. Coe said he thought the people were too old to have any children; but what had become of the children they should have had twenty years ago? "War-time," said Coe, as if that explained it.

So we got down into Georgia, and then into Northern Alabama; and the river wound so that we were two weeks on the way. Coe was to prospect near a town called Florence, or Tuscumbia; places that then we never had heard of.

That day, at dawn, we ran on Muscle Shoals. Fresh from a night under the wild-grape vines, blossoming fragrantly, with a sweetness troubling to the spirit, acrid, whereunder we had slept like one drugged with wine—we had got into our canoe at sunrise or before, and pushed out into the stream. It lay broad and still and shimmering—so broad that we ought to have noticed its two or three miles of surface could scarce cover but three or four inches of depth. But our eyelids were heavy with the wild grape—as if its breath had been some soul phantasm

of what was to be its fruit—and so we paddled dreamily to the midstream and ran aground.

"I say!" said Coe. But there was nothing to be said, and there we hung, two miles from either shore, and the sun rose full up stream, and gilded us.

In all that inland lake was but a hand's-depth of water, flowing swift and softly over sand and shells. We took to our poles; hard choosing it would be which way lay deepest; and, one at either end, "Now then!" from Coe; and we moved, or didn't move, or for the most part spun around upon the grinding shells, and Coe fell out of the boat and splashed shallowly upon his back upon the sand.

So all that day we labored; and the sun grew hot, so that Coe at noon sought wading for the shore to some shelter in the wild grapes; but that, half a stone's-throw from the white clay bank ran swiftly some two fathoms deep of river Tennessee. So he came back and swore, and I laughed; and we set at it again. Meantime the slow, deep-laden scows, each with an appetizing tent for shade, spun downward close under that vine-shaded bank and jeered at us.

Late in the afternoon, raw-handed from the

poles and raw in visage from a straight-down sun, we got away. Still breathless, burning, we too swung down the smooth stream, narrower, though still a half-mile wide; here it ran in curves by bold cliff-points castellated into white, vine-garlanded turrets of the strangely worn and carven limestone. No Rhine could be so beautiful; for here all was unprofaned, silent, houseless, lined by neither road nor rail.

The sun was nearly setting, and Coe's soul turned to beauty, and again he began to marvel at the want of womankind. No country was visible behind the river-banks; and he stood up and studied carefully the shore through his field-glass.

"I think this is the spot," he said.

"Tuscumbia?" said I. But Coe was rapt in study of the river-bank.

"Do you see her?" said I, louder.

Suddenly Coe turned to me in some excitement. "Paddle hard—I think it's the place." And seizing his bow paddle he drove it into the stream so deep that had I not steadied the craft she had rolled over. Englishmen can never get used to inanimate objects; deft is not their word.

So we rounded, always approaching the shore, a bold promontory; in four successive terraces three hundred feet of ranged limestone towers rose loftily, adorned with moss, and vines, and myrtle-ivy, their bases veiled in a grand row of gum-trees lining the shore. No Rheinstein ever was finer, and as we turned one point, a beautiful rich-foliaged ravine came down to meet us, widening at the river to a little park of green and wild flowers, walled on both sides by the castled cliffs; in the centre the most unsullied spring I have ever seen. And all about, no sign of man; no house, or smoke, or road, or track, or trail.

"This is it," said Coe again, as the canoe grated softly on the dazzling sand, and he prepared to leap ashore.

"What," said I, "Tuscumbia?" For there is a legend of this place; and of Tuscumbia, the great chieftain, and the Indian maiden, and their trysting by the silent spring.

"No," said he; "Sheffield. That gorge is the only easy grade to the river for many miles. Through it we shall put our railroad, and this flat will do for terminal facilities—eh!" and he leaped clumsily; for the loud report of a shot-gun broke the air and the

charge whisked almost about our ears, and flashed a hundred yards behind us in the Tennessee.

With one accord we ran up the ravine. There was no path, and the heavy vines and briers twined about our legs, and the tree-trunks of the Middle Ages still lay greenly, but when we sought to clamber over them, collapsed and let us to their punky middles.

Suddenly, as we rounded a bend between two gloomy ravages of rock, there stood before us a young girl, in the green light—her hair as black as I had ever seen, with such a face of white and rose! I stared at her helplessly; Coe, I think, cowered behind me. She looked at us inquiringly a moment; and then, as we neither spoke, turned up the side of the ravine, with her fowling-piece, and vanished by some way unknown to us. I would have followed her, I think, but Coe held me back by the coat-tails.

"Don't," said he. "She's quite welcome to a shot, I am sure."

2.

NEVERTHELESS, after this one moment of chivalrous impulse, Coe set up his levelling-machine and began taking the gradients of the ravine up which this girl had gone. I have never known an Englishman upon whose heart you could make any impression until his stomach was provided for. Meantime I wandered on, admiring the red hibiscus blossom and liana vine that veiled the gorge in tropical luxuriance up to the myrtles of the limestone. Finally I emerged upon the plateau above the river, and found myself in a glorious, green, flowing prairie, many miles broad and apparently as long as the brown Tennessee that lay hid behind me. In the midst of it one iron-furnace was already in blast.

The inn (the International Hotel) at Tuscumbia was very noisy. I was struck by this when I went to my room to dress for sup-

per; I had only been able to get one room for myself and Coe; there were two beds in it, but only one wash-stand. Through the walls, which were very thin, I could hear at least four distinct feminine voices on the one side, and several upon the other. There were also some across the hall that seemed to be engaged in the same conversation; and that the speakers were young ladies I had fleeting but satisfactory evidence when I opened my door to set out my water-jug for a further supply.

"Look here, young man," said the landlord to me, when I again endeavored to get another room for Coe. "How many rooms do you reckon this yer house 'll hold, with fifty-seven guests all wantin' em?"

"Fifty-seven!" said I. The International Hotel was a small two-story wooden house with a portico. "How many can the hotel accommodate?"

"Thirty in winter," said the landlord. "In summer sixty to seventy."

I stared at the man until he explained.

"You see, in the winter, they's most from the North. I hev accommodated seventy-four," added he, meditatively; "but they wuz

all Southerners, an' that wuz befo' the wo'. They took a good bar'l of whiskey a day, they did—an' consid'able Bo'bon," and he ended with a sigh.

"Your present visitors seem chiefly young ladies," I hazarded.

"Hevn't you heard?" and mine host looked at me as if to reassure himself as to my social position. "They is society folks from Knoxville—down here givin' a play—'The Pirates of Penzance,'" and he handed me a newspaper wherein he pointed to a double-leaded announcement setting forth that the well-known Amateur Shakespeare Comedy Club of Knoxville, consisting of ladies and gentlemen of the upper social circles of that city, would appear in this well-known opera, the article closing with a tribute to the personal charms of Miss Birdie McClung, the principal member of the company.

"They hev come down in a Pullman cyar, all to themselves, quite special," said the innkeeper.

"Are any of them married, Colonel Kipperson?" said I, timidly.

The colonel looked at me with scorn; and just then a peal of rippling laughter, melodi-

ous as the waves of the Tennessee upon Muscle Shoals, rang through the thin partition, accompanied by the crash of some falling missile, I think, a hair-brush.

"Does that look as if they wuz married?" said he, and turned upon his heel, as one who gave me up at last. "Supper's at six," he added, relenting, at the door.

Coe turned up at supper, but we saw nothing of the fair actresses; and the evening we passed socially with the leading spirits of the hotel: Judge Hankinson, Colonel Wilkinson, General McBride, Tim Healy, the railroad contractor, and two or three black bottles. Colonel Wilkinson and General McBride had been trying a case before Judge Hankinson, and both were disposed to criticise the latter's rulings, but amiably, as became gentlemen over a whiskey-bottle in the evening. At midnight, just as the judge was ordering a fourth bottle, the door opened, and in walked a very beautiful young woman with black hair and eyes. "Good-evening, Miss Juliet," said the others, as we rose and bowed.

Miss Juliet walked up to the judge, who with difficulty got up, and followed her out

of the room. "Good-night, jedge," and in the pause that followed, General McBride remarked pathetically that "the jedge wasn't what he used to wuz."

"No," said the colonel, with a sigh, "'Ive seen the time when he wouldn't leave a third bottle of his own."

"What relation is Miss Juliet to Judge Wilkinson?" asked Coe.

The general and the colonel started; and Tim Healy looked apprehensively at the door.

"Young man," said the general, "I wouldn't ask that question, if I wuz you."

"The jedge ken still shoot," added the colonel.

All was forgiven when I had explained that Mr. Coe was an Englishman; and we went to bed. About two in the morning the adjoining rooms became suddenly populous with soft voices. Coe started to his elbow in his cot and called to me. "It's only the Amateur Shakespeare Comedy Club of Knoxville, returning from the play," said I; and I dropped asleep and dreamed confusedly of Tuscumbia, the Indian chieftain, feminine voices, and the rippling waters of the Tennessee.

In the morning I got into the train for Chattanooga, leaving Coe behind. On the platform I noticed two graceful girls, dressed in white muslin, wide straw hats with white satin ribbon and sashes, white lace mitts, and thick white veils; not so thick that I could not see that they were brunettes, with hair as black as only grows under Southern nights. The train was composed of two cars—the ordinary Southern local—differing from a Jersey accommodation only in that it had still more peanut shells and an added touch of emigrant-train and circus. At one end sat a tall gentleman in a stovepipe hat, who had removed his boots, and was taking his ease in blue woollen stockings. At the other was a poor, pretty woman, with large, sad eyes, petting her emaciated husband, who was dying of consumption. Just as the train started, he had a terrible fit of coughing; now he leans his head upon her shoulder, and she rests her cheek upon his forehead. Behind me, but across the aisle, are the two young ladies in white muslin.

So we jangle on through the hot Southern June morning; and pretty soon one of the

girls in white comes over and takes the seat behind me. She has thrown off her veil, and I assure you a more beautiful face I never saw; it's all very well to talk of a neck like a lily and cheeks like a rose, and eyes

> "Whose depths unravel the coiled night
> And see the stars at noon——"

but when you really see them you fall down and worship the aggregation whose inventoried details, in any novel, would excite weariness. Meantime, her sister had stretched herself out upon the other seat, pointing one dainty russet leather foot beneath the muslin, and disposed her handkerchief across her eyes.

How to speak to this fair beauty so close behind me I know not; I can almost feel her eyes in the back of my head; so near that I dare not look round; I fear she may be another daughter of Judge Wilkinson's. And the train jangles on, and we are winding through green dense forests, up to the mountains. I wait half an hour for propriety, and then look around; I catch her deep eyes full, "bows on," as it were, her lips parted as if

almost to speak, and I—shrink back in confusion. I hear her give a little sound, whether a sigh or a murmur I am not sure; but pretty soon I hear her struggling with her window. This is my chance; and I rise and with the politest bow I know and "permit me," I seek to help her; but the sash is old and grimed and the angle inconvenient. Finally I have to go around into her seat; and leaning over her I get a purchase and the window goes up with a bang and a cloud of dust that sets us both sneezing. "It is very hot," I say, standing with my hand upon her seat, irresolute.

"Do you know, I thought you were never going to speak?" she says.

I sit down on the seat beside her.

"I hate being unsociable in a railway journey; but, of course, I couldn't speak first. And now there's so little time left," she adds, regretfully.

"Where are you going—not to Chattanooga?"

"Only to Scott's Plains. What's your name?"

"Horatio Higginbotham," I have to reply, fearing she will laugh, though the name is

well known in Salem. She does not laugh at all, but smiles divinely.

"My name is Jeanie Bruce. And that's my sister May. Come over, and I'll introduce you."

We walk across the car and Miss Jeanie says to Miss May (who, it appears, is not asleep), "May, I want to introduce to you my friend, Mr. Higginbotham. Mr. Higginbotham, Miss May Bruce."

I bow to the more languid beauty, who does not rise, but smiles a twin sister of Miss Jeanie's smile, showing her little white teeth and tapping her little foot in a way to make a man distracted which to look at.

"I thought you didn't seem to be getting on very well," says the recumbent May, "but now, I suppose, I can go to sleep," and she pulls the lace handkerchief back over her eyes, and Jeanie leads me (it is the word) back to our seat on the other side of the car. "We are twin sisters; and some people can't tell one from the other. Could you?" And she takes off her hat, pushes the soft black mass back from her brow, and looks at me, frankly, sweetly.

"I shouldn't want to," I say. I think I

am getting on; but she looks at me as if puzzled, half displeased.

"May is engaged," she answers, "and I am not. I have been, though."

"Dear me," I answer, heedlessly; "how old——"

"Seventeen. But I never had a gen'leman ask me such a question before."

She is silent; I speechless. Yet I wish she would pronounce the *t* in "gentleman." She does not bear malice long, but asks "where I come from?"

"Boston," I say; "and *I* am twenty-three."

She laughs merrily, in forgiveness, with a dear, lovable, quick sense of humor. Then she scans me curiously. "I never saw a gen'leman from Boston before."

"There are some there," I answer, humbly.

"Of course we see plenty of commercial travellers," she says, and the conversation languishes. I look out the window, for suggestions, at the tall mountain timber and the bearded gray moss. It suggests nothing but partridges.

"But you have not yet told me whether you can tell us apart."

Thus challenged, I bring my eyes to hers; there is something dazzling about them that always makes it hard to see her face, except when she is looking away; my eyes wander not from hers, until she does look away—out the window—and I suddenly see something familiar in the face.

"Is there much shooting about here?" I ask, abruptly, meaning game.

"Yes, there is a terrible deal. Why, my cousin, Kirk Bruce, was only eighteen when he shot and killed another gen'leman at school."

"Dear me, I didn't mean men," I say. "I meant quail and partridges. And I thought I had seen you yesterday with a shot-gun down in that green bottom by the Tennessee. It might have been men, though; for your shot whistled about the ears of my friend, Mr. Coe."

"I wondered you didn't remember me when you got upon the train," answers Jeanie. "Where is Mr. Coe?"

"He stayed behind at Sheffield," I say. "Do you belong to the 'Pirates of Penzance'?"

"Mercy, no—they're city people from

Knoxville—we've only spent two winters there getting our education in music."

"Is Knoxville a musical city?"

"The advantages there are considered exceptional. We were at the Convent of Sacré-Cœur."

"At the convent?" I ask.

"All our best schools are the convents, you know, for us girls. At Sacré-Cœur we have instruction from Signor Mancini. I have learned seventeen pieces, but May knows twenty-four and two duets."

"Sonatas?" I say. "Concertos? Chopin? Beethoven?"

Miss Bruce shakes her head. "No," she answers, with some pride. "Our music is *all* operatic. Of course, I can play 'The Monastery Bells' and 'The Shepherd's Dream;' but now I'm learning 'Il Trovatore.' My sister can play a concert-piece upon 'La Cenerentola.'"

"What else do you learn?"

"French—and dancing—and embroidery. But I suppose you are terribly learned," and Miss Jeanie takes a wide and searching gaze of my poor countenance with her beautiful soft eyes.

"Not at all. I am a commercial traveller," I say to justify my blushes. It was malicious of me ; for she looks pained.

"Nearly all *our* young gen'lemen have got to go into business since the war. My cousin Bruce——"

(There was an inimitable condescension in her accent of the "our.")

"The one who shot the other boy at school? Don't you think you have too much of that kind of shooting?"

"As a gen'leman he had to do it—in self-defence. Of course, they were both very *young* gen'lemen. The other gen'leman had his revolver out first."

"You ought not to carry revolvers so much."

"There! that's just what I've often said. But how can you help it?"

"I help it."

"You don't say you haven't so much as a pistol with you?" And her gentle eyes are so full open that in looking into them I forget my answer.

"Well, anyhow, it wasn't Cousin Kirk's fault. He didn't have any revolver, either, when he first went out of the house ; but an-

other scholar he ran up and made him take one. Mother didn't ever want him to go to that school, anyhow; several of our family had got shot there before by this other boy's family. This other boy, you see, liked a young lady Cousin Kirk was attentive to; and he sent word in to him one day to come out of the school-house to see him. And the other young gen'lemen in the school, they warned Cousin Kirk not to see him, as he wasn't armed. He'd never ought to have gone out unarmed. But he went. And as soon as they met he shot Cousin Bruce in the right arm. And a friend that was with him gave Cousin Bruce his pistol; and he had to fire; and he killed him; and Cousin Bruce always says that man's face haunts him yet. And the mother of the young man was almost crazy; and afterward she called at the school with a revolver, dressed in deep mourning. And when Cousin Bruce came into the parlor he didn't know who she was; and she shot at him through the crape veil. But, of course, she didn't hit him. And Cousin Bruce always says that man's face haunts him yet."

(I have endeavored to set down this con-

versation just as it happened. At the time I did not know at all what to make of Miss Jeanie Bruce. I had seen no girls like her in Salem, or even Boston. Her English was poor, her education deficient, her manners free. On all these points she was about on a par with the shop-girls in Lynn. But she was not at all like a Lynn shop-girl. Had I supposed it possible for there to be any ladies except according to the Salem and Boston standards, I should have set her down for a lady at the time.)

Here we arrived at Decatur, where I had the pleasure of taking the two Misses Bruce into dinner, in a hotel built alongside of the railroad track, as the principal street of the town. In the long dining-room were six transverse tables, over everyone of which was a huge wooden fan like the blade of a paddle. The six fans were connected together, and at the back of the room a small bare-footed negro swung the entire outfit to and fro by means of a long pole like a boat-hook; and with a great swish! swish! disturbed in regular oscillations the clouds of flies. Miss Jeanie took off the lace mitts at the dinner-table, and upon one forefin-

ger of her pretty white hand I noticed a ring—a single band of gold setting a small ruby.

When we got back into the cars and May had gone to sleep again, I reproached Jeanie with telling me she was not engaged. "I, too, was going to spend this winter at Knoxville, and I had hoped to see something of you."

"I am not engaged," said Miss Jeanie. "The ring was given me by a gen'leman, but I do not care for him at all. I only promised to wear it a few weeks, because he bothered so. I'll tell you what," she said, "to show I don't care for him and remind you to be sure and call, I'll give it to you."

I was in some surprise, you may suppose. "But I can't take a gentleman's ring——"

"It's my ring, I tell you," said Miss Jeanie. "And if you don't take it, I shan't believe you're coming to see me, and I won't give you my address—there!"

What could I do? I took the ring.

When I got that night to Knoxville, I wrote at once to Jerry Sullivan. If they had spent two winters in Knoxville, he might

have met them, or, at least, known something about them.

"KNOXVILLE, June 30, 188—

"DEAR JERRY: Tell me all you know about Miss Jeanie Bruce.

"Yours,

"H. HIGGINBOTHAM."

To which the answer came by telegram:

"H. HIGGINBOTHAM, Knoxville:

"It would take too long.

"SULLIVAN."

3.

I HAD deferred my call upon Miss Bruce until I should receive Sullivan's answer to my letter; but when his telegram came I was in a quandary. It struck me as ambiguous. And what could be the extreme haste that made a telegram advisable? Or, perhaps, was the whole thing only one of Jerry Sullivan's jokes?

Meantime I was wearing Miss Jeanie Bruce's ring. Once it struck me that if I did not mean to call upon her, I ought to send it back. But I did mean to call upon her. There never was any question about that, from the first. I did not in the least approve of her, but I meant to call upon her, if only to tell her so. Her conversation had revealed a certain indifference to human life, but she had very soft and gentle eyes. Like the face of the boy whom Cousin Kirk had shot, they "haunted me yet."

Coe noticed my ring. Oddly enough, though a foreigner, he had got into the ways of the people quicker than I had; and I saw him looking at it one day, though he said nothing. That is, nothing of the ring; he did ask me whether I had been to see Miss Bruce. So I went; they boarded in a small frame house that belonged to a Mrs. Judge Pennoyer. I suspect it was this female justice who came to the door; it was a Monday afternoon and the house was odorous with soup; but Miss Jeanie was "very much engaged." The Friday following she was out, and Wednesday I met her walking on the principal street of Knoxville with a tall young man.

"Try Saturday," said Coe that evening. "I want you to ask those girls for my trip up over the line." During the summer, Coe had got some rusty rails spiked upon his right of way; and now wished to invite the youths and ladies of Tennessee to run over them in a trial trip.

That day I found Miss Jeanie alone in the parlor, almost as if awaiting me. "I began to think you had forgotten us," said she, softly. Dear me, how soft her eyes were! I said that I had called there many times.

"You could scarcely expect me to let you in when another gen'leman was here!" said she. "Especially when——" I saw her look at the ring; but she checked herself. My afternoon calls in Salem had not so exclusively monopolized the lady's attention, and I looked at her, puzzled. Just then the front door-bell rang; and I was confident I heard Mrs. Judge Pennoyer tell someone that Miss Jeanie "was very much engaged."

My conversation languished. I think that Miss Bruce was disappointed. "Shall I play to you?" I saw her hesitate between "The Shepherd Boy" and a romance of Brinley Richards; and I hastened to reply, "I would rather talk."—"But you don't talk," cried she. "But I look."—"You can look while I play."—"Not so well," said I.—"I have a new piece—one they sent me from the convent, the Sacré-Cœur, you know, where I was for some years. It is called the 'Tears of Love.' The musical instruction of the convent was very good. Sister Ignatia had studied in Italy. I suppose it was better than outside—don't you?"

I had never studied in a convent, and I don't think I made much answer, for she

went on. "Of course, you know, it is pleasanter in other ways. One has so much more liberty. Yet the most Kentucky ladies are all educated in convents. But I felt that I wished to see more of society. At the Sacré-Cœur they do not allow you to receive your gen'lemen friends except in the presence of the mother superior."

There was a freshness, a simplicity of method in this young lady's playing with the boys that quite took my breath away, and to relieve the situation I deemed it best to submit to the "Tears of Love." Of this piece of music I remember little, save that the composer was continually bringing the left hand over the right to execute unnecessary arpeggios in the treble notes. Jeanie's girlish figure was so round, and swayed so easily, that I thought this part of the music very pretty.

Then I bethought myself of the object of my visit; and I invited Miss Jeanie and Miss May, on Mr. Coe's behalf, to make the railroad trip. A Salem instinct made me include Mrs. Judge Pennoyer; I then saw in Miss Bruce's look that it had been unnecessary. Only when I got out the door did I

remember that the ring had, after all, been my main object; to return it, I mean.

On the other side of the street, along by a low white-painted paling, lowered a heavy, hulking fellow in a rusty black frock-coat, a great deal of white shirt, and a black clerical tie. In this garb I recognized the Southern University man, and in the man I had a premonition I saw the redoubtable "Cousin Kirk."

4.

COE was chartered by the sovereign States of Florida and Alabama to construct his line "from that part of the Atlantic Ocean called the Gulf of Mexico, in the former State," to a point "at or near" the Tennessee River in the latter. And so "a point at or near the Tennessee River" was the first object of our journey, and this proved as definite a designation as we could give it; though it had public parks and corner lots and a name—on paper. Its name in reality was "Cat Island," the only native settlement being on a beautifully wooded island thus called, midstream in the river.

"Wouldn't do to call it that, you know," said Coe, in a burst of frankness. "Famous place for chills and fever; everybody born on Cat Island, white or black, turns clay-color! So we thought of Bagdad—from its resemblance to the Euphrates."

Mrs. Judge Pennoyer had come; but so had a strange young man whose name I found was Raoul. He devoted himself to Miss May with a simplicity of purpose amazing to a Northern mind. Hardly anyone knew of the expedition at Knoxville, but when we arrived at Bagdad, that spacious plain was peopled in a way to delight the speculator. "Who are they?" I asked of Coe, puzzled at his evident anxiety where I expected pride. "Who are they, O Caliph of Bagdad?"

"Who are they? The Mesopotamians. Dash it," he added, "they've come, with their wives and children, for the trip."

So, indeed, they had. Tim Healy met us as we alighted on the platform of the old railroad station—there was, indeed, a platform, but nothing more—and grasping Coe and me warmly by the hand, said rapidly, in the latter's ear, "had to invite a few of them, you know—prominent gen'lemen of the neighborhood—valuable political influence"—and then, aloud, "General McBride, gen'lemen. Mrs. McBride. Judge Hankinson I think you know. Mr. Coe, I want you fo' to know Senator Langworthy; one of our most prominent citizens, gen'lemen, an' I had the

grea-at-est difficulty in persuading the senator fo' to come along. I told him, Mr. Coe, we could show him something of a railroad already——" Coe expressed his acknowledgments.

"Sir, it was a pleasure to study the developments of my country. It does not need to be a citizen of Bagdad to appreciate the advantages of your location," and the senator waved his hand in the direction of a rusty line of track I then first perceived winding across the prairie from the Tennessee. "Let me introduce to you Mrs. Langworthy." A pale lady, with bonnet-strings untied and a baby at the breast, was indicated by the second gesture; she looked worn and world-weary, but I lived to learn she had an endurance of hardship Stanley might have envied, and a relish for fried cakes and bacon in the small hours of night that I am sure only an optimist could feel. "My partner, Mr. Hanks. My wife's sister, Miss McClung."

By this time we were ready to start. A brand-new locomotive decorated with flowers had backed down awkwardly from the new-laid track to the junction; and we entered what Coe with some pride informed me was

the directors' car. It contained one long saloon, two staterooms, a minute kitchen, and a glass gallery behind.

It was amazing how we all got into it; and when we had, I counted three babies, seven old women, and a dog, besides some twenty men. All had brought their luncheon-baskets, and the babies (except that appertaining unto Mrs. Senator Langworthy) were consoled with bottles. After a prodigious deal of whistling, we were off, and Bagdad resumed its quietude—at least, we thought so; but even then a distant shouting was heard, and Colonel Wilkinson, his wife, and two urchin boys were descried, hastening down the track from the direction of the Bagdad Hotel. Judge Hankinson pulled the bell-cord and then thrust his head out of a window and roared to the engineer. "Stop, driver, its Colonel Wilkinson. How are you, colonel?" he added to that gentleman, who had arrived, and was mopping himself with a red silk handkerchief, his wife and offspring still some laps behind. "Almost thought you'd be left."

"Great heavens, I wish he was!" groaned Coe in my ear.

"Never mind, the judge hasn't brought Miss Julia," said Tim Healey; and this time we were really off.

I have neither time nor memory to describe that day; though it was very funny while it lasted, perhaps all the funnier that there was no one to share the humor of it. Everybody was great on the development of the country, and everybody made speeches. We stopped at least twenty times in the first fifteen miles to look at a seam of coal, or a field of iron, or a marble quarry (suitable for the Alhambra Palace or the new State capitol, sir), or, at least, one of the most wonderful mineral springs of the world—only waiting the completion of Colonel Coe's line of railroad to become another Saratoga. At all these places we got off the train, and went in a long, straggling, irregular file to inspect, Mrs. Senator Langworthy ruthlessly interrupting the repast of her youngest-born at such moments, and leaving him upon a car-seat in charge of the fireman. At the quarry or mineral spring the proprietor would take his turn in making a little stump speech, standing on the edge and gesticulating into the pool, while the rest of us stood grouped

around the margin. Meantime Miss May Bruce and Raoul would go to walk in the woods; and we would hear the engine whistling wildly for us to return. It was a novel interruption to a flirtation, that railway-whistle; but everybody looked upon us amiably as we hurried down to the track; live and let live, and take your time for happiness; no schedule time, as at Salem.

By the hot noon we were above the river valley and winding up the folds of fir-forest that clothed the shaggy shoulders of the mountain. Engine No. 100 puffed and strained, and reeled up before us like a drunken man. We had had our dinner; the sexes began to separate, and even the Langworthy baby went to sleep. Raoul and May were riding on the engine. I left Miss Jeanie Bruce and joined the gentlemen, who were sitting cross-legged and contented in the smoking end of the car, from the glass-housed platform of which we looked already back upon the great central plain from the rising Appalachians.

"Oh, it's a glorious country," said "Colonel" Coe; and, I think, winked at me.

"Why, senator," said the judge, "I have

seen a corner-lot sold at Bagdad six times in one day, 'n a thousan' dollars higher every time."

"General," said the senator, "do you know what the original purchase of the Bagdad Land and Investment Company aggregated —for the whole eighteen hundred acres?"

There was a silence. Everybody looked at me. It dawned upon me that I was the "general," and I wondered why I ranked poor Coe.

"I've no idea," I hastened to add; fearing the senator had followed Coe's wink.

"Thirty thousand dollars," answered General McBride, as if it were a game of "School-teacher." "And they sold three hundred acres for——"

"Fifteen hundred thousand dollars," resumed Judge Hankinson, with intense solemnity.

"Paper?" said Tim Healy.

"Cash, Captain Healy," said the judge, fiercely, "cash."

"I want to know!—Was that the lot you bought of Widow Enraghty, judge?"

A roar of laughter greeted Tim's answer. People tipped back their chairs, slapping

their thighs; the Langworthy baby woke up and cried, and even the judge screwed up his whiskey-softened old face in vain.

"Tell us about it, judge," said Raoul, who had come back from the engine and was peering over our shoulders. "I'm a young lawyer, and I want to know these tricks."

"Young man," said the judge, "I'll *tell* you, and let it be a warning to you when you're married, to be honest and say so" (Raoul blushed violently). "The fact was, I had been acquainted with the widow Enraghty more than fifty years—her husband had got killed in the forties, an' she was sixty-five if she was a day, and she owned that valuable corner lot opposite the new Court-house and by the building of the Board of Trade." ("Not built yet," whispered Coe to me.) "I'd been dickering with her for weeks; but I stood at four thousand, and she wanted five. Now I rode up that morning (it was a fine day; warm and spring-like, and I felt rather sanguine) and I said, 'What's your price, Mrs. Enraghty, to-day?' 'Six thousand,' said she. This raise made me kind o' nervous, an' I got rash. 'I'll give you three thousand,' said I, 'cash.' 'Here's

your deed,' says Widow Enraghty. And I declare she had it all ready. I looked at it carefully; it seemed all right, and I paid her the money. I kinder noticed there was a young fellow sittin' in the room. Well, sir!"

"Well, judge?" The judge's manner grew impressive.

"Next week that young fellow—Bill Pepper he was, an' he was just twenty-one—he brought an ejectment against me. *She had married him that morning.* So Bill Pepper kep' the land, and Mrs. Pepper kep' the money."

In the laughter that followed I became conscious of Raoul pinching my arm mysteriously. "I want a word with you in private," said he. "Would you mind coming out upon the cow-catcher? It's been railed off on purpose for observation," he added, answering my look of amazement, "and it's a first-rate place to see the cobweb trestle from. It's something about the young ladies," he added, seeing that I still hesitated, "and there's really no other place."

I looked through the car, but perceived the ladies were sitting in earnest conclave. On the front platform Mrs. Langworthy and

the baby were taking the air. In the cab of the engine were the two girls. I suppose I made a gesture of assent, for Raoul nodded to the engineer, who slowed to a halt that almost threw the Langworthy's domestic group into the bed of a brawling mountain stream some three hundred feet below.

"These gen'lemen want to ride on the pilot," shouted the engineer in explanation; and we took our way to that exalted perch, where, sitting cross-legged and with hands nervously gripping the rail, I listened to Raoul's story.

The Misses Bruce, he said, were wild not to go back that day with the railroad party, but to drive to the end of the location through the woods.

"Great Heavens!" said I, "but only Coe and I are going, with Captain Healy. There is nothing but tents——"

"The ladies are used to camping out."

"But it will be so rough—there are two thousand niggers in camp!"

"The ladies are not afraid."

I certainly was; for just then, with a preliminary corkscrew-like lurch, the engine began climbing the famous cobweb trestle; the

earth suddenly vanished beneath us and we looked down through a lath-like tracery of wooden girders to the foaming stream, now four hundred feet below. I heard a cry behind, and looking timidly around, I saw the pale face of Jeanie at one engine-window and of May Bruce at the other.

"But — but there is no chaperone," I gasped.

"Mrs. Judge Pennoyer has agreed to come," answered Mr. Raoul, sweetly.

5.

THE end of our journey lay upon the very summit of the mountain ridge; twenty leagues of forest all around. Here, with the sweep of his gesture to the westering sun, Judge Hankinson made the great speech of the day. I remember little about it save that he likened Coe to Icarus, referred to me (General Higginbotham) as one of the merchant princes of the Orient, and to Tim Healy as some mighty magician "spinning his iron spell o'er mountain and o'er sea." The rusty iron rails stopped abruptly in a field of stumps; beyond and below us stretched "the right of way." Only a broad swath cut through the forest, the trees heaped where they fell, like jack-straws. At the edge of the clearing stood a three-seated wagon and a pair of mules.

Everyone took very simply to the proposition that we were not returning; and af-

ter all the speech-making was over and all the whiskey drunk, the train, with prolonged and reiterated tooting, began backing slowly down the mountain toward civilization again.

"Isn't this delightful?" said Miss Jeanie. Tim Healy sniffed.

I had made it all right with Coe; but Healy still looked at the proceeding askance.

"Last time I rode through this yer wood I had the pay-chest with me; and two bullets went through my hat. And last week they killed the United States mail and Jim, the storekeeper of Section Fourteen."

I considered this to be a story for tenderfeet, so I mildly hinted that "they" would not attack so large a party.

"Won't they, though? The only double mule team as ever goes through yer is the month's pay, an' hit's jest due this Saturday."

"Who is 'they'?" said I.

"Moonshiners. But they're all on 'em up to it. Hope you've got your shooters?"

By this time we had started, and were driving through the twilight of the forest over a trail hardly perceptible where the wood grew scantier.

"Not I," said I, "I never carry them."

"Nor I," said Coe, "I left 'em on the bureau at home."

"All right," said Tim, gloomily. "But most fellers like a shot of their own afore they turn their toes up."

Miss Jeanie produced a small, pearl-handled, silver-mounted revolver, and begged me to borrow it. Miss May handed the mate of it to Coe; and young Raoul displayed a formidable pair of Smith & Wesson's, where he was sitting with her on the back seat.

"All right," said Tim, somewhat mollified. "But the wood's chock full of chickers all the same."

At this the ladies appeared really so terrified that I asked what "chickers" were, and discovered them to be a kind of insect.

"I've got my pennyr'yle," said Mrs. Judge Pennoyer, who was a woman of resource.

What a drive it was! We lost our way; and the girls sang. Tim swore, Mrs. Judge Pennoyer laughed, and May and Jeanie sang all the sweeter. Tim Healy thought he saw twenty moonshiners and emptied his revolver at one of them; a charred stump it proved to be. We passed one hut in a clear-

ing, and were refreshed by veritable whiskey; *i.e.*, "pinetop" whiskey, milky-white in color, and said to be made out of the cones of pines. We found the trail once more and the stars came out, and the nightingales sang, and May Bruce and young Raoul became more silent. At last we saw, upon a hillside in the forest, the burning pitch-pine torches of the great construction "camp." Hundreds of black forms surrounded these ruddy fires; from some of the groups came sounds of banjos and negroes singing; and I looked suddenly up and saw the starlight reflected in Miss Jeanie's eyes.

There was only one tent in the camp with "sides" to it—*i.e.*, perpendicular flaps making walls below the roof, and that, of course, was sacred to the ladies. We lay beneath a mere V-shaped canvas roof, which was stretched downward so as to end some three feet from the ground, our heads in a heap of pillows, and our legs all radiating outward, like a starfish, to terminate in thirty booted feet. Under the canvas back I could see the starlight, and there I lay awake some time regarding it, which now seemed to bear some reflection of Miss Jeanie's eyes. Next thing

came the sun and opened mine by shining into them; then closed them up again, and I rolled into the canvas-shade, and up, and out of doors, and followed Coe and Healy to the "branch" below. Big Bear Creek it was, of a rich red-chocolate color, fit, perhaps, to wash a Chinaman who could not see. Yet Coe took a plunge, and looked up, white enough.

"Come in," he shouted to us, who were hesitating, "it doesn't come off."

The negroes had been sleeping all over the place, tentless; and now they were pulling themselves together, in groups, and starting for the railroad, or rather where the railroad was to be. On the way they stopped at the commissaries' to get their breakfast, standing in long rows before the counter, waiting their turn. The commissaries' stores were the only wooden buildings in camp; well walled and bolted, too, as they had to be, said Tim Healy, to withstand the attacks of a riotous Saturday night. Four men, he said, were always in them armed; and on Saturday nights, pay-night, they would often empty a revolver or two into the crowd and perhaps "drop" a nigger, before it ceased to besiege their doors for fruit or whiskey.

Then we all went to breakfast, the Misses Bruce both fresh as dewy wood-flowers, and Mrs. Judge Pennoyer radiating amiability. Only the head commissary and the section contractor were thought of sufficient social importance to breakfast with us, and the former from his stores brought many delicacies in cans and bottles. Then after breakfast we went to walk—the ladies with sunshades and gloves—upon the location; a broad swath cut through the rolling forest and undulating far as the eye could reach in either direction, dotted with men and mules. Ahead, they were still blowing out stumps with gunpowder and dragging them away; where we stood was being built an embankment of gravel; and they were dragging out gravel from the "cut" ahead and heaping it upon the long mound. I gave my hand to Miss Jeanie and helped her up. Each black negro worked with a splendid mule; seventeen or eighteen hands high perhaps, dragging a curious sort of drag-spade, which the mule knew how to catch in the gravel, turn out full, drag the load evenly along, and then tip it out adroitly at the precise spot, a foot in front of the last dump; the negro hardly

doing more than standing by to see the mule kept working; not, of course, working himself. Thus each man-laborer became an overseer, if only to a mule.

"The mule's the finer animal of the two," said Coe, "and much the more moral."

"But he's got no vote," grunted Jim. "Ef we didn't keep them black Mississippi niggers up here off'm the farms, they'd swamp us all."

"Are they allowed to bring their wives to camp with them?" queried Miss Jeanie, softly; and, following her glance, we saw several coal-black damsels sitting in the warm sand-bank at the side of the cut, their finery about them, and evidently established there for the morning, basking in the sun.

"Oh, yes, they bring up their wives," said Healy, reluctantly. "If we didn't, they'd run away every two or three days. Nothing a contractor dislikes so much as irregular labor."

"But it shows they have some good in them to be so devoted," said Miss Jeanie.

"We don't all of us have emotions stronger than money-getting," added I.

"I don't know about emotions," said Tim. "There's forty of their wives and eighteen

hundred niggers, and every Saturday night they has a fight an' a batch on 'em gets killed, an' I know it's terrible expensive on labor. Most as bad as moonshine."

"Have you got King Kelly, yet?" said Coe, in an undertone.

"Hush!" hissed Captain Healy, dramatically. Just then I noticed a file of peculiarly idle negroes sauntering down the "right of way;" they had passed us once or twice before, and appeared to have no occupation. "See anythin' peculiar about them niggers?"

"They are very lazy," said Coe.

"They look like minstrels," said Miss Jeanie.

"By gracious!" cried Healy, slapping his thigh, "if she hasn't hit it!" We looked at him inquiringly; he dropped his voice to a stage whisper. "Come up here," and he started, dragging Mrs. Judge Pennoyer by one hand up the new gravel slope beside the line. Raoul followed, with Miss May; he had been very silent that morning; and I with Miss Jeanie. Her little foot was buried at once in the sliding gravel, over the dainty low shoe; I wanted to carry her up, had only propriety sanctioned it. At the top, Healy

swept the horizon as if for spies; then bending over us, all in a close group, he said:

"Them ain't real niggers—them's United States revenue officers from New Orleans, under General McBride."

"General McBride?"

"He's in hidin' in my hut. He wouldn't black up. But them deputy-marshals thought it was a spree. We had to do it. Every Saturday the niggers are paid off—one dollar and fifty cents a day, nigh on to ten dollars apiece—an' then King Kelly he'd come down from his stills in the mountain, with his men loaded with casks o' pine-top, warranted to kill—an' by sundown eighteen hundred niggers would be blind-drunk, an' fit for shootin'. On last Sunday we lost sixty-two hands. An' the head contractor, he swore nigh to lift yer ha'r off."

"Sixty-two men killed?" cried Jeanie, in horror.

"Some killed, some wounded; but it tells on the contract just the same. Why, you could have heared 'em poppin' all over camp."

The Higginbothams had always been abolitionists; and I felt my ancestors turn in their complacent graves.

"Expect to get Kelly this time?" said Coe.

"Dunno, we'll see at twelve o'clock, when they're paid off. It'll be quite a thing to see, all the same. But the ladies had better stay in their tent. An' it's eleven now, so I reckon we'll go back to camp. See, there go the marshals."

When we got back to camp Raoul received a telegram. He read it hastily, and crumpled it into his pocket; but, I thought, looked troubled.

Jeanie and I wandered down by the brook side before dinner, and afterward Raoul, Healy, Coe, and I sallied forth to "see the fun." We were let into the chief commissary's hut, the front of which, above a strong wooden bar, was open; and before it a great crowd of negroes, singing and dancing, and a hundred others, in a long queue, waiting for their pay. "You kin lie down on the floor ef they git to shootin'," said General McBride, whom we found there smoking placidly in a cane-seated chair. "Those revolvers won't carry through the boards."

It was a curious spectacle, that line of coal-black, stalwart, "swamp" negroes; and then to watch the first human expression—in their

case greed—impress their stolid features as they took their pay. Among the crowd we noticed many bearded, well-armed, flannel-shirted mountaineers; these we took to be the moonshiners; and near each one, but loitering as if to avoid attention, one of the made-up negroes; to us now obviously factitious. It was a wonder the moonshiners did not find them out, but that they were intent on other things.

"See, that's King Kelly," whispered General McBride. "That big fellow there with the slouched hat and rifle." Having said this, I was surprised to hear him, when the last man had been paid off, get up and make a speech to the navvies, in which he congratulated them that the camp had at last been freed from that great pest, Kelly; and urged them to save their money and be abstemious. "I am General McBride, of New Orleans ——"

"Three cheers for Gineral McBride, of New Orleans!" cried a big mulatto opposite, I thought at a sign from Healy. They were given, not very heartily.

"And I've come up to see those poisoners keep away."

I had seen the man he said was Kelly start and look about him, as if for other enemies; then he stood still nervously, and fidgetted at his gun. Meanwhile the General made quite a speech, apparently thinking the opportunity too good a one to remain unimproved. He took every occasion to heap obloquy upon the head of Kelly, king of the moonshiners; and concluded by lamenting that that "poor white trash" would not dare to show his head in camp while even he, McBride, was there alone."

"Look yar," shouted Kelly, striding up to the bar of the tent when he had got through, 'I'm the man you call King Kelly; an' I've got four stills a-runnin' within a bit an' a screech of this yer camp; an' I kin tell yer it's deuced lucky yer white-faced, biled-shirted revenue officers stayed down to New Orleans."

"And I," said another, "I own a still myself; an' it ain't goin' ter stop up fur no United States Government—though we're mighty glad to see the Gineral, ez he comes here sociable and pleasant like."

"And I," "and I," "and I;" and three more strode forward, and I noticed a pair of

pseudo darkies get behind each one as he moved.

"What'll yer take ter drink, Gineral?" said Kelly. Quick as a flash, every man had four stout arms about his neck, choking him, and the handcuffs on his wrists. Not a shot was fired; and Kelly and his gang were safely immured in an improvised guardhouse. The General sank back upon his cane-seated chair.

"A pretty job, gentlemen," said he. "What *will* you take to drink? None of their pine-top, though," he added, with a laugh. "Yet, I don't know as you can hardly blame 'em—corn's mighty scarce up here."

"May I trouble you, sir, with a few words in private?" The voice was serious, but familiar, and appertained to Mr. Hampton Raoul.

6.

"I HAVE appealed to you, sir," said Raoul, when we had abandoned the still quiet camp for the solitude of the forest, "to demand that which every gentleman has the right to ask of every other."

I feared the man had some notion of a duel, and his next words did not tend to relieve me. "I have long loved Miss Bruce."

I must have appeared disquieted, for he hastened to add, "Miss May Bruce, I mean. But until yesterday I did not know my love was returned. We have now resolved on being married."

I expressed my congratulations, but intimated that I did not yet see how my aid was necessary.

"We have resolved to make our bridal journey to the White Sulphur Springs, in Virginia. We shall be married upon arrival there, and I should esteem it a favor initial

of a life-long friendship if you, sir, would consent to be best man. Moreover, your escort may prove necessary to Miss Jeanie to return."

My escort! to Miss Jeanie! I was to travel with her four hundred miles—meantime her sister philandering with this young man—perhaps make a visit at a fashionable watering-place—give away her sister in matrimony—and then make the principal bridesmaid companion of my journey home! And this young Huguenot, *pour sauver la situation*, called me her escort. I looked at Raoul; his attitude was impassive and his manner still courteous; but evidently he thought there was something unchivalric even in my hesitation.

"I—has Miss Jeanie Bruce," I hazarded, "yet been told of your plans?"

"Of course—and she approves them. She can hardly invite you herself to join her party; it might look forward, as you and she, necessarily, will be left much to yourselves."

Absent-mindedly I twirled the ring on my finger, still there, that she had given me. Evidently, as a gentleman, in the eyes of him,

of her, and of her sister, there was nothing else for me to do. "I must see Miss Bruce herself," I gasped.

"Certainly," said Raoul. "I had reckoned, sir, that such would be your course. I will meet you in front of the commissary's tent at three. We start at four." He stalked off, and left me under the live-oak tree.

It was two o'clock. I felt that I must see Miss Jeanie at once. Nothing could exceed the good-breeding of her greeting; but she evidently expected me to go. The calm of her gentle voice told me so. I found the two beautiful young girls in afternoon toilette of white muslin, half reclining under their open tent, fanning themselves. I think I would not have been so much in doubt had not Jeanie been so very pretty. Then, how hazard, in the presence of her sister, and of her own soft eyes, the fear that she might be committing an impropriety?

And it was with the greatest difficulty and an acute sense of my own brutality, that I did so. I began by congratulating Miss May, which evoked a lovable blush. "You know we have to start after dark and drive twenty miles to-night," said she, "to a sta-

tion on the Georgia road—we cannot return the same way; Mr. Raoul has some reason."

"Do you think that we four ought to go off—ought to go off just like that?"

Miss Bruce looked at me, amazed. Jeanie tried to help her. "Do you not have wedding-journeys in the North?"

"Alone, I mean," I ended, desperately.

"Alone? Mrs. Judge Pennoyer is going."

Mrs. Judge Pennoyer had all the elements of a true sport; and I went back to Raoul—(having had a long walk down the brook with Jeanie; her happiness in her sister's prospects was quite charming)—an hour after the time fixed, less decided—I think there is some adventurous blood in the Higginbothams—and found the camp in a state of wild tumult. Raoul met me nervously.

"General McBride paroled Kelly and his gang," said he, "and the moonshiners have come back from the mountains a hundred strong, and given the revenue officers twenty minutes to leave for New Orleans."

"And are they going?" said I.

"They calculate, sir, to go," answered Raoul, gravely. "The mule team will take

them back to the head of the line, and there we have wired for a special to carry them back to Bagdad. I have decided it is best for us to go with them. The special train simplifies matters. I trust you have come to a decision?"

"I—I do not know," said I.

"We certainly cannot leave them here in camp. Every nigger in it will be blind drunk before midnight, and they are fortifying the commissary's store."

"What on earth did McBride mean by paroling those ruffians," I sighed. "It was beginning to be so pleasant."

"It was an error of judgment. But it will be equally pleasant at White Sulphur."

As we talked we had returned to the centre of the camp. There we found a picturesque scene. McBride and his men were seated in the glade of the live-oak forest, no longer disguised; around them stood or lounged some forty bearded mountaineers, all provided with long rifles. General McBride was sitting with King Kelly himself, amicably drinking his own "pine-top;" as we approached he rose to meet us and handed a telegram to Raoul, who cast his eyes over it and gave it

to me, with the remark that it might assist my decision. It read :

"If cousins Miss Bruce are with you, detain them and escorts. Will wire parental authority to-morrow.

"KIRK BRUCE."

"I feel bound, sir, to ask you your intentions," said McBride to Raoul.

"Miss May Bruce and I are to be married, sir."

"In that case, sir," said the General, "in the absence of parental authority I cannot, of course, interfere. Permit me to congratulate you." They shook hands.

"And this Northern gentleman ? "

"Goes with me, of course. And Mrs. Judge Pennoyer."

"A most estimable lady. I knew her as a girl."

"We thought of returning on your special."

" An excellent idea. Particularly as I have an idea Mr. Bruce may pass us on Number Two. But stop—we have unluckily only one mule-team."

"Is there no room?" I asked. For I, myself, was beginning to see the necessity of getting away—to White Sulphur or to Salem.

"Room enough—but you must remember we have nigh twenty miles through the woods. These gentlemen—" and the General waved his hand at the surrounding moonshiners—"will naturally take a few shots at us."

We looked at one another in perplexity. The colloquy was interrupted by the appearance of Jeanie and May, in travelling dress again, but looking very charming, and Mrs. Judge Pennoyer. To her the situation was rapidly explained.

I have before remarked that Mrs. Pennoyer was a true sport. She rose immediately to the occasion, and desired to be introduced to King Kelly.

"Colonel Kelly," said she, "these young ladies are travelling under my protection. One of them is engaged to be married to Mr. Raoul, and they are desirous of going to White Sulphur on their wedding journey. As there is only one wagon they must return with General McBride's party. I trust the journey will be perfectly safe."

Kelly scratched his head. "I can answer, of course, for these gentlemen here," said he, "but some of my friends are out'n the mountain, and it may be difficult to notify them of the sitooation. Let me see your team," he added, as if a bright idea struck him.

The General and Kelly walked off in the direction of the wagon. The ladies followed. Raoul, Healy, Coe, and I followed the ladies. The undisguised United States marshals followed us, and the moonshiners followed the marshals. It was a large wagon with high wooden sides, bound with iron, and was used for bringing supplies to camp. A team of six of the biggest mules—some fully eighteen hands high—was already being harnessed to it.

"Reckon you can fix the ladies safely," said Kelly. "We are good shots on the mountain," he added, significantly, to McBride.

"I see your idea," said the General. "Bring some straw."

The straw was brought and filled the bottom of the wagon. Upon this sat the three ladies. McBride, Coe, and Healy went on the high front seat; Raoul and I sat on the

tail-board looking out behind; and the eight revenue officers disposed themselves, four on each side, sitting on the side-board with their legs hanging over. They had nothing but six-shooters, which, however, they displayed with some ostentation.

"Colonel Kelly," said Raoul, slipping down after he had taken his seat, "lend me one of your rifles—I want it very particularly" (I heard him add the name of "Kirk Bruce," in the ear of that chief of moonshiners), "and I'll send it back in Number Four to-morrow."

"By G—— you shall have it, sir." And Kelly gave him his own. "I like your spunk, sir; an' if you'n Mrs. Raoul will come back here without them darned biled-shirted gov'en'-m'nt men, I'll give you a real good time."

"Thank you, Colonel," said Raoul. "Good-by—and fire high."

We departed amid quite a cheer; lumbering out of the picturesque great camp some two hours before sunset, and as we passed the negroes' quarters, heard already sounds of revelry beginning. We felt the girls were fairly safe between the double rampart of men. Still, the General thought they had

perhaps better not sing (which they were fond of doing), so the long ride was rather silent. Raoul lay leaning back, talking in whispers with May Bruce, and I was left to do the same with Jeanie. Coming to the last long hill before the end of the line, one or two shots were fired; but they whistled in the tree-tops far above our heads. We found the "special" waiting for us, got into the one "directors' car," and started safely.

But when we got to the siding at Bear Creek, Raoul asked the conductor which train had the right of way. Learning that the special had, he beckoned to me, and, taking his rifle, went out upon the rear platform. I followed, wondering. Our train was running rather fast, the engine having suddenly started up after Raoul's conversation with the conductor; I presume to him also Raoul had explained "the sitooation." At Bear Creek the regular up-train stood side-tracked waiting for us. We rattled by, and on its rear platform, in the moonlight, I saw a tall frock-coated figure standing. I had hardly recognized it to be Kirk Bruce when Raoul threw up his rifle, and I saw a flash of fire from the platform of the side-tracked Mr. Bruce. The

reports were quite simultaneous; but neither was hurt, for I saw Bruce leaning his head out of the shadow of the platform to look at us, while Raoul remarked, as we went back into the car, now jumping wildly on the down grade:

"He knew I was yere, and I knew he was thar. You'd hardly see worse rifle-practice in the North."

There was a tinge of disgust in his voice, and he went out to smoke on the engine.

"Was it Cousin Kirk?" said May to me, breathlessly.

I nodded. Jeanie blushed.

7.

THE United States marshals from New Orleans had kept rather quiet throughout the journey; but as we approached the city of Bagdad their spirits rose. The momentary interest caused by Mr. Raoul's and Cousin Kirk's shots had subsided when they learned there was nothing national or professional in the affair. Amateur shooting was always poor. But May Bruce was considered with more attention; and when their "special" of a "shirt-tail" engine and a caboose backed up to the Bagdad platform, they all requested to be presented to her. General McBride performed the ceremony with much formality; including Mrs. Judge Pennoyer, upon whom, I could see, they looked with a reverence that only her years divided from admiration. Even Raoul came in for some passive applause; but I played, as I saw, a very second fiddle, which is why, perhaps, Miss Jeanie

and I went off and took a walk, by moonlight, down through the ravine where I first met her.

We returned to find Mrs. Pennoyer slumbering peacefully on a settee; but Raoul was walking up and down nervously. The straight track stretched glistening away in the moonlight, but not a train nor engine was in sight.

"How long do you think it'll take Mr. Bruce to get down back here?" says Raoul to me, nervously.

"Train Number Two doesn't come back till to-morrow, they said."

"I know; but the station man here tells me the engineer on Number Two married a cousin of Kirk Bruce's brother-in-law. Our train doesn't come along from Memphis until four in the morning. And there's not an engine to be had in Bagdad."

"There's one," said I; and I pointed to a distant shower of sparks above the forest. At the same moment the peculiar light rattle of a "wild" engine was audible.

"My God, sir, so it is!" answered Raoul. "And it's on the line of the Tennessee River and Gulf."

"Number Two?" I answered, grimly, for I was getting to understand the ways of the place. "What shall we do?"

"Do?" said Raoul; "why, get ready, of course. He may shoot before he stops the engine; lucky I've got a rifle. You go in and prepare the ladies. . . . This is my quar'l," he added, impatiently, at my demur. "Besides you ain't got only that girl's popgun. Reckon you'll have a chance later, likely."

So I went in, and told the girls; and we woke up Mrs. Judge Pennoyer, who, I am bound to say, took it more calmly than might have been expected from a lady of her years. May was tearful; but Jeanie's eyes were very bright. All this time the rattle of the engine was growing louder down the grade.

"Haven't you kept that revolver I gave you?" said Jeanie to me.

I looked at her; and went out upon the platform just in time to see the engine dash up, and a strange figure jump out of the cab.

"It's all right," he cried; "drop your iron. I've got a message from King Kelly." I observed the man had a blackened face and uncouth costume; he did not look like an

engineer, though a negro fireman was on the smoking engine. The saturnine Raoul tore open the envelope, read the letter twice, and handed it to me with the nearest approach to a chuckle I had heard him give. I also read it, while the negro fireman opened half his head and laughed aloud.

"What will you take, sir?" I heard Raoul say; then, as the ladies, overcome by the curiosity this unexpected silence caused, came out upon the platform, I heard him introducing the man of the charcoal face to each in turn.

The letter was as follows:

"—— Raoul, Esq.

"Dear Sir: A gentleman have arrived here on Number Two, inkwiring for you, and I take him for to be a member of Mrs. Raoul's family, so I got him and his ingineer here in Camp and reckon I kin hold him about till termorrer sundown.

"Yours trooly,

"Lucius R. Kelly."

8.

BEATI POSSIDENTES. I now saw that under the methods of Southern courtship the man who had got the lady had a great advantage. The Memphis express pulled up at four in the morning in front of a burning tar-barrel on the track, which Raoul had placed there as a hint to it to stop at Bagdad. How our story always got out so quickly, I don't know; but two members of Congress from Mississippi turned out of the two end sections and were accommodated with shakedowns in the smoking compartment of the crowded Pullman, with Raoul and myself.

I did not sleep very well, and at seven in the morning got out at Chattanooga. What was my surprise at seeing Mrs. Judge Pennoyer also emerge, fully dressed, from the sleeping-car.

"You young people don't want me," said she, benevolently. "I should only be in the

way. An' I'm getting out here to take the day train on to Knoxville. If I got out thar, they might stop ye before the train pulled out again; now ye'll all get by unbeknownst."

What could I oppose to such strategy? Moreover, the young ladies were still in their berths. I could not leave Miss Jeanie to come back alone. I bowed; the train started; I got in it.

The sunlight broadened, but it was high noon and we had passed Knoxville before the two girls appeared, fresher than the June morning, and rosier, I am sure, than Raoul or I. With some trepidation I told them of Mrs. Pennoyer's evasion.

"Dear Aunt Emily," said May, "she has always been like a mother to me." But Jeanie, I fancied, blushed; and that day talked to Raoul, while May was left to me.

The impending catastrophe made May very gentle and silent, but we now heard Jeanie and Mr. Raoul in speech of much light laughter at the other end of the car.

"I suppose," said I, "they are laughing at the way Mr. Kirk Bruce's pursuit has stopped in moonshine."

Miss May looked at me inquiringly. "Cousin Kirk was never attentive to me," said she.

"He is attentive enough now," I laughed; and she looked at me as if about to say something—but bit her red lips.

Jeanie certainly avoided me. When Raoul came back to talk to his fiancée, her sister made pretext of a headache and lay down. The train was not a quick one, and stopped long periods at several stations, during which Raoul was obviously nervous. His brow only cleared when we got to Bristol, Va., about sunset. Here we stopped an hour for supper, half of which we four devoted to a walk. The town consisted principally of a long straight street, lined by low two-story brick shops; the one-story shops had false fronts and presented an appearance of uniformity. Boots, saddles, guns, groceries, and drygoods were the articles they sold.

I had noticed that Raoul kept persistently on one side of the street, and when I started to cross over, to look at a particularly gorgeous embroidered Mexican saddle on the other side, he held me back.

"This street," said he, "is the State line

between Virginia and Tennessee. I think we had better keep on the Virginia side."

"How odd," said Jeanie, "to have a town divided against itself!"

"It is a great convenience," answered Mr. Raoul. "When my father and Colonel Carington had their dispute about the last constitutional convention, both were candidates for the governorship, my father in Tennessee and the colonel in Virginia. The constitution of Tennessee disqualified a man who fought a duel from holding office. So my father stood on the Virginia side of the street and the colonel in Tennessee. The distance between the sidewalks is just about right, as you see. There was a warrant out against my father in Tennessee and the colonel in Virginia."

"And did they fight?" I asked.

"Oh, yes—and the sheriffs looked on, but they couldn't cross the street. And the colonel, he allowed he was shot accidentally by a bullet from another State. The case went up to the Supreme Court, but they allowed they couldn't say any duel was fought in Tennessee, and the Constitution does not disqualify a man for shooting, but only just for duelling."

At this point a prolonged whistling recalled us to the station. Here we found an elegant Pullman car added to the train for our accommodation, "with the superintendent's compliments to Mr. Raoul." The darky porters in it were smiling broadly, and on the table was a huge bouquet of orange-blossoms.

In the morning we woke up—or Raoul woke me up—at the station for White Sulphur. He had a telegram signed "Emily Pennoyer." which warned him to lose no time, that Kirk Bruce was on the night express.

"May and I have decided to go to the county Judge and get married directly," said he. Our Pullman car had been shunted on a side track at the little station; the rest of the train had gone on, and the little village was quiet and fragrant as a bank of wild flowers. "Fortunately, he is a friend of my father's."

We found the Judge, I think, before his breakfast, smoking on his piazza, which was covered with jasmine and magnolia. He led us directly across the road to a little brick court-house, where he found another couple

waiting already, more sheepish than ourselves, who had driven all night in a buggy, with an old white horse. The groom was awkward and embarrassed, with his trousers tucked in his boots; the bride was buxom and blushing, but seemed hardly more than a child.

"First come, first served," said the Judge, and we all went into the court-house, where the clerk unlocked his register, and the blushing pair stood up before us, the groom having first hitched the old white horse to the fence outside. We four were accommodated with seats upon the bench.

"Do you think she's twenty-one?" whispered the Judge to Raoul, while the rustic bride shuffled uneasily upon her new shoes.

"Twenty-one? She's not eighteen," said Raoul.

"Dear me," whispered the Judge. "Guess she'll have to be—reckon I'll forget to ask her."

The pair were married with us as witnesses; Jeanie gave the bride her parasol for a wedding present, and the old white horse and buggy scrambled away. "And now," said the Judge, turning to Jeanie, "how old are you?"

There was a pause of embarrassment; then Raoul spoke up bravely: "It's not Miss Jeanie—it's Miss May Bruce, and she's quite eighteen."

"Eighteen?" said the Judge. "She must be twenty-one—or have you the parents' consent?"

"No," said Raoul. "Eighteen is old enough in Alabama."

"Twenty-one in Virginia," said the Judge. "Give me the Code."

The clerk handed him a musty leather volume from beneath a musty leather Bible. Twenty-one it was, sure enough.

"Why did you say she was only eighteen?" said the Judge, peevishly.

"But you married the others," answered I.

"True," said the Judge, "but I've had a telegram for you—from a Mr. Kirk Bruce, who, I take it, is a relative of the bride."

Raoul's face maintained its customary look of quiet determination. "Where is the nearest State where a lady is free to get married at eighteen?"

"South Carolina," said the Judge.

"All right," said Raoul. "I've got a car,

and I reckon Colonel Carington will give us transportation."

"I'll see that he does," said the Judge, his face brightening. "I guess you'd better go to Charleston."

"Spartanburg is the nearest point," said Raoul. "He'll never think of Spartanburg."

"True," said the Judge, "he'll never think of Spartanburg. Lucky, Colonel Carington is at the Springs."

In two hours we had borrowed an old freight engine and were off on our way to Spartanburg.

9.

THE freight engine had been loaned us by telegram from Colonel Carington, and we had found our Pullman car pulled up on an old rusty side-track that ran into a bed of wild flowers; on the front platform, half smothered by them, our two darkies were asleep. They wakened, however, to greet us with smiles of such expansive intimacy that I felt bound, when we were safely on the way, to put them *au courant* of the situation. The solemnity and sympathy their faces at once assumed guaranteed their discretion; though I afterward heard the "conductor" adjuring the engineer from the front platform to "git up that thar burro-engine wif'm bacon-ham." Whereupon the engineer sanded the track and blew "off brakes."

The long journey was rather distressing, however. The brave girls did not lose their spirits, but they kept to themselves, resting

in the state-room, while Raoul and I sat on the rear platform and watched the dust eddy up from the long single track behind us. We had innumerable waits and sidings; where often the girls and I wandered into the woods after wild flowers, while Raoul stayed behind to pepper Mrs. Judge Pennoyer with telegrams. We were now by the highest mountains of the East; Roan Mountain still, though it was June, was rosy-robed about its shoulders with the laurel.

The day wore on, and I could get no speech with Jeanie. I looked for my *dédommagement* to the journey home. This I no longer dreaded; it was a rosy hope. But Jeanie was so timid, now—or I was bolder. In the evening we had a long wait for the night express, which rattled by our siding at a wood-and-water station.

"Perhaps Mr. Bruce is on that train," I laughed.

"No," said Raoul, gravely (he never had a sense of humor); "I am confident he is not."

"How do you know?"

"I have had a telegram from Mrs. Judge Pennoyer."

"Is she his confidante?"

"She says that he has suddenly decided to await your return in Knoxville."

"Await my return?"

"Certainly—yours and Miss Jeanie's. I conclude the Judge this morning wired him an answer that it was not Jeanie who was getting married."

I gasped. "Then it was not you, after all, he was chasing?"

"Why, of course not."

"Why did you run away so?"

Raoul looked at me as who should say, "Oh, these Northerners!"

"Perhaps it wasn't necessary," he added, with that faint tinge of sarcasm which is akin to humor. "Is that your ring you wear upon your finger?"

I know I started; and I felt myself blush. "It—it was given to me to wear," I gasped.

"Exactly—and by Miss Jeanie Bruce—and Mr. Kirk Bruce gave it to Miss Jeanie. Of course he thought—when he heard a Miss Bruce and a gentleman had gone off to get married——"

"Kirk Bruce gave it to her?" I said. My mind works slowly at such times.

"Certainly. Did she not tell you so?"

"She said a gentleman gave it her——"

"Well, he was the gentleman."

"Who had shot a schoolmate at boarding-school——"

"Same man, I assure you."

"For being attentive to a young lady who ——"

"Kirk Bruce, to a T."

"Went out without a revolver——"

"As you did yourself. I think," concluded Raoul, "you had better give Miss Jeanie her ring back."

"If I do," said I, "I'm damned."

10.

THEY were married the next day in the pretty little Episcopal church in Spartanburg, by the Bishop of Georgia. They left the same afternoon on their wedding journey back to "Old White" and the North. Miss Jeanie Bruce and I accompanied them—or rather, they us—as far as the junction station (I forget its name), where they met the eastbound train, and we were to keep on to Knoxville.

Jeanie's sweet face was very pale, but her eyes were like deep wells—so deep now that they indeed "unravelled the coiled night and saw the stars by noon." She had to sit by me now; but her silence appealed even to a blunted Northern sense of chivalry. I foresaw that I, too, should have to keep silence until I had brought her home to Knoxville. But not a day longer! Not an hour, I inly vowed.

But oh, the beauty of that immediate future! The long twenty hours' journey after they left us at the junction—where she was under my protection, and no Kirk Bruce could say me nay! Even chivalry at such times is like a *sordine* on one harp-string—heart-string I had almost said. And one's being is so resonant that the note of speech is hardly missed.

So, I had my two-hours' day-dream, and then Mrs. Judge Pennoyer turned up on that east-bound train, as chaperone to bring us home.

"You telegraphed for her?" I said to Jeanie.

She did not deny it; and I thought Mrs. Pennoyer cast one look at me as of contempt.

Then I saw her see the ring upon my finger, and her expression seemed to change.

We saw the happy pair go off, and we went back to our seats in the returning train. We three; and one of us most miserable, and that was I.

I had given up all hope of talking with Jeanie any more. She went off with Mrs. Pennoyer to a front seat, where I saw them in earnest consultation; and that ancient re-

lict of justice tempered by mercy appeared to be speaking of me. I watched them; and I heard the words "Mr. Bruce" and "the ring;" and I saw Jeanie grow still more pale.

Finally, to my glad astonishment, she rose, and like a brave lady—not like those Northern girls I knew in Salem, who would not dare throw a man a life preserver to save him from drowning—sweet and gracious, she came back to me.

"Mr. Higginbotham" (what a name to set by Raoul, or even Bruce), "I must have my ring again," said she.

"Never," I answered. "It is not your ring, but mine."

"I only lent it to you. I did not give it."

"Then lend it to me a little longer—till I have seen you home," I said.

Her eyes filled with tears, and my heart was drowned in them.

"But Mrs. Pennoyer says Cousin Kirk is waiting for us there. Oh, please."

"Let him wait," I said.

"But, please. I implore you — as you——"

"As I love you," I said. "As I love you, I shall keep it. Will you marry me?"

"I—I do not love you," she answered, almost in a whisper. "Now, will you give it back?"

"No," I said.

I saw her tears. "He will kill you;" and she left me, sobbing.

"Then, you can take it," I called out, after her.

Man can be brutal at such times.

Mrs. Pennoyer came back and tried to move me. Who could, after Jeanie Bruce had failed? Moreover, I thought she thought she would have done like me.

I fear Jeanie cried most of that journey home. But I, as is the way of man, was happy.

We got back to Knoxville in the early morning. They did not wish me to go home with them from the station; so I put them in a carriage, and sat upon the box. We drove up to the piazza of the little house upon which sat a man in a black frock-coat, smoking a cigar. He threw it away, and took off his hat to the ladies. We both assisted them out; and Jeanie ran quickly into the house, Mrs. Judge Pennoyer following. I paid the carriage, and it drove away.

"Now, sir," said Mr. Kirk Bruce.

"Now, sir," said I.

"I will request you, sir, for to give me that ring that is on your finger."

"That ring does not belong to me."

"That is why, sir, I ask you as a gentleman, fo' to give it up."

"That is why, sir, I am compelled as a gentleman, fo' to refuse."

Insults to one's diction come next to those that touch the heart. Mr. Bruce had me, forthwith, "covered" with his revolver.

"Are you engaged to Miss Jeanie Bruce?"

"I am not."

"Then, sir, as a gentleman, you have no right to wear that ring."

I had heard vague stories of firing through one's coat pocket; and I felt in mine for the little revolver Jeanie had given me. But the miserable little toy was turned the wrong way, and I could not twist it about.

"He is engaged to me — he is," cried Jeanie, bursting out from the front door. "He asked me on the train."

"And you refused me," I said, turning my eyes for one moment away from Bruce to look at her.

"I did not—I only——"

How it happened, I do not know; but at that instant the confounded revolver went off in my pocket. With a cry, Jeanie threw up her arms and fell upon the floor of the piazza. Bruce and I were at her feet instantly. Mrs. Pennoyer rushed out. The neighbors rushed across from over the way.

"Is she killed?" said Bruce and I, together.

As we spoke Jeanie made a dart, and picking up Bruce's revolver, which he had dropped upon the grass, threw it over a high board fence into the neighboring lot. Then turning, "Give me your ring," said she.

I gave it to her.

"And now," she said, replacing it on another finger, "Cousin Kirk, let me introduce to you the gentleman to whom I am to be married—Mr. Higginbotham, of Boston."

"Salem," I corrected, in a dazed way.

"Of Salem. Cousin Kirk—congratulate him."

Cousin Kirk looked at her, at me, and at the board fence.

"As a gentleman, sir, I have no other thing to do. Of course—if my cousin loves

you—you may keep the ring. Though I must allow, sir, you shoot rather late."

With this one simple sarcasm he departed. Jeanie and I watched him groping in the long grass of the next lot for his revolver and then go slouching down the road. We turned and our eyes met. I tried to take her hand; but suddenly her face grew scarlet. "Oh, what have I done?" and she rushed into the house.

I went back to Salem.

I stayed there just four days. In New York I met Jerry Sullivan and had a talk with him. He will, in future, suppress his sense of humor when inditing telegrams.

Then I wrote and asked Jeanie if she would accept me, save at the pistol's mouth.

Mr. and Mrs. Raoul accompanied us on our wedding journey; and we were married at White Sulphur by the genial justice *de céans.*

LOS CARAQUEÑOS

BEING THE LIFE HISTORY OF DON SEBASTIAN MARQUES DEL TORRE AND OF DOLORES, HIS WIFE, CONDESA DE LUNA

I.

PAGANISM was the avowal of life; Christianity the sacrifice of it. So the world civilized has always separated at the two diverging roads, according as brain or blood has ruled their lives; the Turanian races, and after them the Latins, to assert life; the Semitic races, and after them the Teutons, to deny it. So the Church of Rome, as nearest in time to Paganism, has been nearer the avowal of life, has recognized, through all its inquisitions, human hearts; the Sects have sought to stifle them; the Puritans have posed to ignore them. Thus cruelty may be the crime of priests; hypocrisy has been the vice of preachers.

Hence my poor friend Tetherby, spinning his affections from his brain, tired with a mesh of head-wrought duties, died, or rather ceased to live, of a moral heart-failure. His heart was too good to be made out of brains

alone; and his life was ended with the loss of that girl of his—what was her name, Myra, Marcia?—born, in the Northland, of a warmer blood, who fell a victim there, as the rose-tree does in too cold a climate, to the creeping things of earth. Now it happened that that same year I was told the story of Dolores, Marquesa del Torre y Luna, almost the last of the old Spanish nobility of Carácas, called la doña sola de la casa del Rey—as we should say, the lonely lady of the house of the King—for she lived there, married and widow, fifty years, and left no child to inherit the thick-walled city house, four square about its garden, and the provinces of coffee-trees, and, what she prized more and we prize less, the noble blood of Torre and of Luna, now run dry.

There are two things in the little city of Carácas that go back to the time when the Spanish empire made a simulacrum of the Roman round the world—one is the great round-arched Spanish bridge, spanning the deep arroyo on the mountain slope above the present town—useless now, for the earthquake clefts are deeper on either side than this gorge of the ancient river of the city,

and have drained its stream away—and the other this great stone fortress in the centre of the present town, with walls eight feet thick, its windows like tunnels cut through to the iron unglazed casement—for this was the only house that was left standing on the evening of the great earthquake; and so the modern city clusters timidly about it, its houses a modest one- or double-story, and, on the clay slope where the older city was, the cactus grows, and the zenith sun burns the clay banks red, and the old "gold-dust road," over the Cordillera to the sea, now but a mule-path of scattered cobble-stone, winds lonely and narrow across the splendid bridge, among the great fissures that the earthquake left. And both bridge and house still bear the sculptured blazonry, the lions and the castles, and the pious inscription to the greater glory of the Virgin.

Carácas lies in a plain, like the Vega of Granada, only green with palms as well as poplars; but through its rich meadows a turbid mountain torrent runs, and south, and west, and east are mountains; and north the mighty Silla lifts almost to the snows, half breaking the ceaseless east wind of the sea;

trade-wind, it has been called in history; slave-wind were better. And by the little city is the palm-clad Calvareo, the little hill gay with orchids and shaded by tree-ferns, in whose pleasant paths the city people still take their pleasure (for the name of Calvary but means the view, not any sadness), and took their pleasure, eighty years since, when this story begins. And one evening, in the early years of the century, there walked alone, or with but a nurse for her dueña, a girl whose beauty still smiles down through sad tradition and through evil story, to lighten the dark streets of the old Spanish town, whose stones for many years her feet have ceased to press. And the memory of the old Casa Rey, the castle, all is hers; and the people of the town, the Caraqueños, still see her lovely face at the window; first at one, and then at the other, but mostly at the grated window in the round tower of the corner, that projects and commands the two streets; for there her sweet, pale face used to show itself, between the bars, and watch for the cavalry her noble husband led, returning from the wars. For then were wars of liberation, when freedom was fought for, not

possession and estates; and the Marquis Sebastian Ruy del Torre led in all. And days and days she would watch for him returning, after battles won, she sitting with her golden needle-work at the corner window, her night-black hair against the iron bar (for there are no glass window-panes in Carácas), her strange blue eyes still watching down the street. So she sat there, and broidered chasuble or altar-cloth for the holy church of Santa Maria de las Mercedes, where she prayed each dawn and evening, yet cast her eyes down either street between each stitch, to watch the coming of him she loved on earth. And the people of Carácas used to gather her glances to their hearts, like blue flowers, for of herself they saw no more than this.

But her husband, from their wedding-day, never saw her more. For fifty years she sat at this window, working chasuble and stole, and always, when the distant trumpet sounded, or the first gold-and-scarlet pennon fluttered far down the street, she would drop her work and rise. And then she would wave her hand, and her husband would wave his hand, at the head of his column far away. This was for the populace. But

then she would go from the window; and be seen there no more while he stayed at Carácas. . . . But those that were beneath the window used to say (for the husband was too far off then to see) that before she left the window, she would cast a long look down the street to that distance where he rode, and those that saw this glance say that for sweetness no eye of mortal saw its equal, and the story is, it made little children smile, and turned old bad men good, and even women loved her face.

Then she vanished from the tower, and they saw her no more. During all the time that might be the Marquis's stay, no more she came to the window, no more to the door. State dinners were given there in the King's house; banquets, aye, and balls, where all that was Castilian in Carácas came; but the custom was well known, and no one marvelled that the châtelaine came not to meet them; the lovely Lady Dolores, whom no one ever spoke to or saw. Some dueña, some relation, some young niece or noble lady, cousin of either the del Torre, was there and did the honors. And of the Marquesa no one ever spoke, for it was understood that,

though not in a convent, she was no longer in the world—even to her husband, it was said, at first with bated breath, then openly.

For the servants told, and the family, and it was no secret, how days and weeks before her lord returned the lady would busy herself with preparations. And their state suite of rooms, and their nuptial-chamber (into which, alas! she else had never come!) were prepared by her, and made bright and joyous with rich flowers, and sweet to his heart by the knowledge of her presence, and the touch of her dear hand. Then, when all was done, and one white rose from her bosom in a single vase (and in a score of years this white rose never failed), she darkened the rooms and left them for his coming, and went back to her seat in the stone-floored tower room, and sat there with her gold and silver embroidery, and so watched for him. And while he stayed in his palace, she lived in those cold, bare rooms; for they alone had not been changed when they were married, but had been kept as they had been a prison, and my lady Dolores loved them best; but she came not now to the window, lest their eyes might meet.

II.

SO fifty years she lived there; and that is why the old Spaniard of Carácas still points out the house, and young men and maidens like to make their trysting-places of its gardens, which are public and where the band plays evenings—if that can be called trysting to our northern notions, which is but a stolen mutual glance in passing. But hearts are warm in Catholic Spain, and they dare not more; right hard they throb and burn for just so much as this—aye, and break for the lack of it. I say, fifty years—fifty years she lived there, but forty she lived alone, for at the end of ten years he died; and the manner of her living and his dying is what I have to tell.

But after that still forty years she lived on alone. Now she no longer worked at the window, and she came there but rarely. It seemed she came there for compassion, that

the people, whom she felt so loving, might see her smile. For her smile was sweet as ever, only now it bore the peace of heaven, not the yearning love of earth. Yet never went she out her doors. And when she died —it is only some years since—they buried her upon Good Friday, and she sleeps in her own church, beneath the great gold shrine she loved and wrought for, of Mary, Mother of the Pities. And all the people of the city saw her funeral; and there is, in the church, a picture of the Virgin, that is really her, painted by a dying artist that had seen her face at the window many years before.

And did they not, the Caraqueños, wonder and ask the cause of this?—What was it?—They do not know—But did they not ask the story of the lonely lady, so well known to them?—They asked many years since; but soon gave over; partly that the secret was impenetrable, partly for love of her. For they had, the poorest peasant of them, that quick sympathy to stanch heart's wounds that all the conventions of the strenuous North must lack. God gives in all things compensation; and even sins, that are not mean or selfish, have their half atoning vir-

tues. Their silence was soothing to her sorrow; they never knew. But the priest?—The Church of Rome is cruel, but it keeps its secrets. And only it and Heaven know if their lives were one long agony of misguidance, as many lives must be on earth—perhaps sometimes the priest-confessor may help in such affairs; if so, God speed the Jesuits. But one thing is sure: in all their lives, after their marriage, they never met. She died old, in gentle silence; he still young, upon a bloody field; and now their eyes at last met in Heaven, "her soul he knows not from her body, nor his love from God."

And we may, harmless, venture to tell what the people of Carácas say—with reverent memory, and loving glances at the old stone house; the hearts that inhabited it are cold; but its Spanish arms above the door still last, clear-cut as on the day the pride of this world's life first bade the owner place them there.

III.

IN the Calvareo that evening the Doña Dolores walked alone, with only old Jacinta, the black nurse; black she was called, but her hair alone was black—blue-black; her face was of that fiery brown that marks the Venezuelen Indian; she was not fat, as most nurses, but stood erect, with fierce lurid eyes, her hair in two tight braids, and was following and watching her gentle charge. Jacinta had things to do in our story; her race has nothing of the merry sloth, the gross animality of the negro; what things Jacinta found to do, were done. She was scarce a dozen years older than her mistress, and her form was still as lithe, her step as firm and quick as that of that boy of hers, now twelve, in the military school, training under the *soutane'd* Jesuits for the service of the Church—or Bolivar. And in the Calvareo also that evening were two men—nephew and uncle, both

cousins of Dolores—and not, of course, walking with her or speaking to her, save by reverent bows; and, on the nephew's part at least, by looks of fire. Yet the uncle might, perhaps, have walked with her, even in Caracas; for he, whom men called the General, despite his prouder titles, was not her cousin only, but her guardian.

Dolores and her maid have traversed the spiral path to the summit of the little hill; there is a little pool and fountain that the Moors, generations back, had taught these people's ancestors to build; and from a bench among the orchids and the jasmine, and the charming amaryllis lily, standing sentry by her, like a band of spearmen, sees Dolores the lovely valley, purple in the first shadows of the short tropic day, and, on the southern mountain, the white walls of the Archbishop's new convent; to the north, and higher, the little mountain fort guarding the road to the coast, and, as she looks, it dips its colors to the sunset, which are the yellow and red—the blood and gold—of Spain, and the booming of its little cannon echoes down the valley and the Angelus replies. Then she turns, and touches tenderly (not plucks)

a marvellous lonely flower that blooms beside her. It is the Eucharis Amazonica, the lily of the Amazon, but known to her only as the *Flor del Espiritu santo*—the flower of the Holy Ghost. One moment, it seems that she will be disturbed. The younger man has left the older on his walk—for they are not always together, and gossip has made him suitor for his cousin's hand, and he stands a moment watching her, behind a group of tree-ferns. No lovelier a girl had surely even his eyes ever rested on, as she sat there stilly, though her wonderful eyes were lost to him, following the sunset. And she was the greatest heiress in all the Spanish Main.

He might have stepped forward, into the open, to her, and no one but Jacinta would have known. Perhaps he was about to do so; but suddenly there appeared, on the hill-top beside them, a tall figure dressed in a purple gown, with hood and trimmings of bright scarlet, looking like a fuchsia flower; on his head was a little black velvet covering shaped half like a crown. It was the young Jesuit, the Archbishop of the Guianas. Dolores rose and kissed his hand, bending the knee respectfully; he sat down beside her.

IV.

THE Condesa de Luna, the orphan daughter of dead parents who represented both branches of a famous old Gothic family, already known about the capital for her beauty, was known far and wide as the richest heiress in all Venezuela and Guiana; her prairies stretched from the ocean to the Apure, her herds so countless that they roamed wild upon pampas which were hers, hunted by peons who were hers. The old stone castle with the Spanish arms was hers, and another like it stood empty for her in far Madrid. Her guardian, the Marquis del Torre, was a poor man beside her; and his nephew, Don Ramon, poorer still.

Dolores was brought up as follows: At five she rose, and went, with Jacinta, to early mass—nearly always to a different church, as is the seemly custom in Carácas, lest young men should take advantage of it and take

position behind the chairs of their adored ones in church, where they could not be repelled; for, of course, no young gentleman, however madly in love, would insult his lady by accosting her in the open street. After mass, at six, being the time of sunrise and by comparison safe, Jacinta would take her charge for a walk, usually on the Calvareo, then deserted. At seven they would be home, and then in the great court-yard, under the palms and rose-red orchids, Dolores would take her lessons—French, English, music—all from priests. At eleven, bath; at twelve, breakfast; then reading, perhaps a siesta in a hammock made of birds' plumage. So she passed her days, all in the half-light of the great court-yard; only toward sunset again would she see the open sky, driving with one of her two governesses in the state carriage down the broad valley to where the wheel road stopped, and back again; or more rarely, as on this night, venturing on another walk. And all the youth of Carácas would gaze after her carriage; the young men driving out too, by themselves, in carriages, who had passed their days more in gambling or cock-fighting than with books and music;

never, indeed, at mass. For here the lords of creation vent their authority in ordaining their wives and sisters to the Church and goodness, themselves to evil. But the most hardened duellist among them could no more than look at Dolores; only her reckless cousin Ramon would venture to ride athwart her carriage, and presume upon his cousinship to bow.

Yet intercourse is possible always betwixt young people who seek each other out; and all Carácas gave Ramon to her for her suitor. And to-night even, as he stood and glowered at the Archbishop from behind the tree-ferns, he had another chance. For there is, and was, one more strange custom in this strange city; at the sunset hour the young ladies of Carácas, all in their gayest dresses, sit in the great open windows and look upon the street —a curious sight it is to see the bright eyes and white throats thrust, like birds from a cage, through the iron bars of the sombre stone windows. (For no wind or cold ever needs a window of glass in that perpetual perfect weather; the high sun never makes a shutter needful in the narrow streets.) And there they sit, unoccupied; and the

young men of the city, dressed also in their best, walk by as slowly, and look as lingeringly, as they dare; and perhaps, if the dark shadow of mamma or the dueña does not come out too quickly from the inner room, a few quick words are spoken, and a flower left or given. And what says the old proverb of the Caraqueños?

"*Better two words in secret than a thousand openly.*"

Sebastian Ruy, Marques del Torre, too, was bred as a young nobleman of oldest lineage should be, or should have been, in that early eighteenth century that still lingered then in the Andes. But this took him to Madrid and to Paris in the years VII. and VIII.; and the eighteenth century, as one knows, ended in those wee small numbers. Torre came back to plunge his country in a revolution which lasted intermittently, like one of its own volcanoes, for more than twenty years. The young Parisian étudiant began his first émeute in Carácas itself, with a barricade after the orthodox fashion of the years I. and II. This being quickly suppressed—partly that there were no pavements, and partly that each house was an impregnable fortress—but

mostly that the city was of the governing class and stood with Spain—Torre had had to leave the capital for the pampas, where, for over twelve years, he maintained discursive warfare with a changeable command of Indians and peons, which, however, on the whole, increased in numbers, officered by a few young gentlemen, under himself. His marquisate he forgot, and sought to make others forget it. He was, throughout Venezuela, The General. He had never been back within the walls of Carácas; and, at nearly forty, he learned of his only aunt's death following his uncle's, and of the little girl they left, and of his guardianship.

A little girl she appeared to his imagination on the pampas; when he got to Carácas, she was a young woman. The General's locks were already grizzled and his face weather-beaten with ten years' open life on the plains; his face was marked, close beside the eye, with the scar of a sabre. He had one interview with Dolores, saw her nurse, her instructors, her father confessor; heard stories about his nephew Don Ramon, which troubled him, went back to camp.

Then intervened a brief campaign in the

mountains of the Isla Margarita; Torre went there to take command. This is the famed old island of pearls; they lie there in the reefs amid the bones of men and ships. Torre found no pearls, but he defeated the royal troops in the first engagement resembling an open battle he had ventured fight. This matter settled, he lay awake at night, and thought about his new ward. Further tidings reached him from Carácas, of his nephew. It was said young Ramon boasted he would marry her. Then the King, as is the royal way after defeat in battle, made further concessions to the "Liberals," as the revolutionists were called; and in the coaxing amity of the time, Torre was permitted, nay, invited, to return to the capital. He did so, and was immediately tendered a banquet by the royal Governor, and a ball at which his ward was present. The royal Governor and his lady sat beneath a pavilion, webbed of the scarlet and gold of Spain. The Countess Dolores came and curtsied deeply to them; then she rose the taller for it, and as she turned haughtily away they saw that she was almost robed in pearls; three strands about her neck and six about

her waist; and the ribbon in her mantilla was pale green, white, and red. El Gobernador only smiled at this, the liberal tricolor, and made a pretty speech about it; but the vice-regal lady made some ill-natured reference to the pearls, as spoils from Margarita. Don Ramon was standing by and heard it. The General saw it not.

After the formal dance the General went up to compliment his ward. This was the first time he had seen her since his return; for even he could not call save in the presence of the family; and she had no other family than himself. He could not call on her until—unless—he married her. He said, "I am glad my lady Countess is kinder to our colors than my nephew." He watched her as he said this; she started, and at the end of the sentence blushed. He saw her blush. Then he bowed, as if to retire.

"The pearls," she said, hastily, "are all I have; see!" And the Marquis, bowing, saw that the neck-strands were not a necklace, but after passing thrice around her neck, descended to be lost in the laces of her dress.

The Marquis ended his bow, and went back to camp. Next week there came an Indian

soldier to Dolores with a box of island pearls; they were large as grapeshot, and went thrice about her waist. But the General no longer contradicted her engagement to his nephew.

V.

THE General had never known women; he had only known what men (and women, too) say of women. At Paris, and Madrid, he had seen his friends see dancers, figurantes; he did not confound other women with these, but he had known none other. Of girls, in particular, he was ignorant. A man of Latin race never sees a girl; in America, North America, it is different, and one sometimes wonders if we justify it.

Some weeks after the General got back to his camp (which was high up amid the huge mountain, the first mainland that Columbus saw, which fends the Gulf of Paria from the sea), he was astounded by the appearance of no less a person than his nephew Ramon. He had broken with the royal cause, he said, and come to seek service beneath his uncle. He did not say what statement he had left behind him in Carácas—no explanation was

necessary in the then Venezuela for joining any war—but how he had justified his delaying his coming nuptials with Dolores. For he loved her, this young fellow; yet he said—allowed it to be said—that in the process *de se ranger*, in the process of arrangement, for his bride, that she might find her place unoccupied, certain other arrangements had been necessary which took time.

He did not tell this story to his uncle, who took him and sought to make a soldier of him. Not this story; but he told him that he loved Dolores; and his uncle—was he not twenty years younger?—believed him. Twenty years, or fifteen; 'tis little difference when you pass the decade.

But the General found him hard material to work up. He was ready enough at a private brawl; ready enough, if the humor struck him, to go at the enemy; but not to lead his men there. And his men were readier to gamble with him than to follow him; though brave enough, in a way.

Yet the General Marquis blinded his faults —aye, and paid his debts—for when he lost at "pharaon" a certain pearl he wore, the uncle bought it back for him, with a cau-

tion to risk his money, not his honor; at which the young captain grit his teeth, and would have challenged any but a creditor. And when a certain girl, a Spanish woman, followed him to camp, del Torre knew of it, and helped Ramon to bid her go; and if the General thought the worse of him, he did not think Dolores loved him less; for was not Sebastian himself brought up on that cruel half-truth that some women still do their sex the harm to make a whole one? that women love a rake reformed. Then came a battle, and both were wounded, and more concessions from his Catholic Majesty; and in their wake the wounded gentlemen went back to Carácas.

The General's hair was grayer, and in that stay again he saw Dolores only once, and that was in church. At mass, high mass, *Te Deum*, for the Catholic Majesty's concessions, Don Ramon stood behind her chair; and del Torre saw them from a pillar opposite, and again the girl countess blushed. And after mass the new Archbishop met him in the street and talked—of him, and of his ward, and of Don Ramon.

"He is a graceless reprobate," said this peon-priest.

The Marquis sighed. "A soldier—for a brave man there is always hope."

The Archbishop eyed him.

"She loves him?"

"She loves him."

"He is poor!"

"She is rich."

"You should marry her," said the Archbishop, and shrugged his shoulders.

A week after he met them all again; and this was that evening in the garden.

VI.

NOW, this arch-priest had been a peon, and a soldier in del Torre's army; and then he had left it, and had seen the viceroy and been traitor to the rebels, and so became a priest; and then, heaven and the vice-queen knew how, bishop; and but that his archiepiscopal credentials were now fresh from Rome, del Torre, still a Catholic, had called him traitor! Del Torre could not like the man, though he stood between him and God; and he knew that disliking must be mutual; and he marvelled, simple soldier! that the intoxicating message came from him. But he put this cup of heaven from his lips.

For del Torre, from his fierce August of war, had learned to love this April maiden with all his heart, and with all his life and his strong soul. Were not his hairs gray, and his face so worn and weather-beaten?

And his heart—he had none fit for this lady of the light. Enough that it was his pearls that clasped her slender waist.

The Archbishop, too, had seen his gray hairs; yet he thought that it was best? He had said so. Perhaps he wanted her possessions for the Church. His nephew Don Ramon cursed the Archbishop for sitting there that night, and saying to her—what? Novitiate and convent, perhaps, or his own sins. For the lady Dolores was devout as only girls can be who have warm hearts and noble souls, and are brought up in cloisters.

Del Torre stood on the other side of the Calvary hill, where the sunset lay, and looked at it, dimly—for his heart was breaking; the Archbishop kept close his converse with Dolores; perhaps he saw her fiery younger lover lurking in the branches. She rose—she and Jacinta — and the priest walked home with them. He talked to her of nephew Ramon and his crimes — not his sins with women, for the priest, too, was a crafty man, and did her sex no honor—but of his gambling, his brawling, his unsaintliness. He said Ramon was a coward; and when Dolores' pale cheek reddened, he marked it

again ; and when she broke at this, he told her a trumped-up story of his last battle under his grave uncle. For Dolores, noble maiden, had not yet confessed her life's love to herself—how then to her confessor ?

The Archbishop walked slowly home with her, Jacinta just behind, and left her under that old stone scutcheon on the door. Del Torre and Don Ramon lingered behind ; and when they had passed her window, she was sitting there, looking weary. The old General passed by, sweeping off his hat, his eyes on the ground. He had been talking to the youth of all the duties of his life and love; but Ramon was inattentive, watching for her. As they passed her window Ramon lingered, daring a word to Dolores through the iron bars. He asked her for a rose she wore. She looked at him a moment, then gave it to him, with a message. The Marquis saw her give the rose ; he did not hear the message. Don Ramon did ; and his face turned the color of a winter leaf. As he walked on, he crushed the rose, then threw it in the gutter. For the girl, womanlike, had told the rival first.

That night Ramon intoxicated himself in some tavern brawl. He had a companion

with him, not of his own sex; and when another officer reproached him with it, for his cousin, he swore that he would marry her, and that she had been—— Then they fought a duel, and both were wounded.

VII.

THE General heard of it the next morning, and it was even the Archbishop brought him the news. The priest besought del Torre to marry his ward, but he was obdurate; the crafty priest wrestled with the soldier's will all through that day, and neither conquered. But the General's face looked worn; he argued, only sadly, of the hot blood of youth, of the hope in her love for the nephew, and of his bravery. Then late in the day came the young officer, wounded, the bandage on his breast half stanching the heart's blood he had shed for her, and besought the general not to give her to Don Ramon. Del Torre stood as if at bay. "You love her too?" he cried.

"Ay, and would save her," said the young man, faintly.

"You must protect her from this libertine,"

then said the priest. For he wished her to marry the one he thought she loved not.

"She loves him!" sighed the General.

"You must save her——"

"I will live with her, and guard her as my own——"

"You may not," said the priest.

"I am her guardian——"

"You may not—you must marry her."

"I am old and she is young——"

"The holy Church demands it!"

"I love her not—I——" the lie stuck in his lips.

Late in the afternoon del Torre went to see Dolores. She was at vesper service, and he waited until she came back, pale. He began to speak. "I have heard all," she interrupted; "Jacinta told me." And again he saw her blush.

Del Torre groaned; he turned aside. Then he strode back to her, his sabre clanking as he walked. "God forgive me if I err. Dolores, you may not marry this man—you —you must—Señorita Condesa, will you marry me?"

Dolores looked up; she had been red, she was now pale. So blushes lie.

"Santissima Maria," she said, below her breath.

"The Church—the Archbishop—demand it," del Torre hurried on, not looking at her, for he heard her exclamation. "I love you —well enough—to wed you." The soldier's voice broke, too feeble now to cry a charge. He never saw her look at him. God pardon him for looking down.

"You love me—well enough to wed me ——" She had turned red again, and her voice was low. He looked, and saw it.

"I will keep you, and watch over you, Dolores, with my life. The Church demands it—I am but a soldier—will you marry me?"

Her dark head was bowed, and the purple of her eyes he saw not.

"Yes," she said; but, oh, so gravely, so coldly!

He bowed ceremoniously, and touched her hand to his lips; then he turned and left the stone-walled tropic garden. And as his sabre clanked in the passage-way, she threw herself on the hammock in a flood of tears.

And that is how they were affianced.

VIII.

THE love of a man for a girl is perhaps different from any other passion our souls on earth are tempered with. Daphnis and Chloe are pretty, natural, charming to paint and write *vers de société* about; but so simple as to be shallow, so natural as to be replaceable. To Daphnis, we know that any other Chloe will be Chloe too. And they are in reality selfish; they seek the consummation of their wishes: he his, she hers. It may be the same human energy; but in the fierce, almost blasphemous, self-abnegation of the man's love, it seems as different a manifestation as the earth-rending power of freezing water from the swelling of a bud at spring. The man can renounce his love; but he desires her well-being with a will to which murder is an incident and the will divine but an obstacle to be overcome.

The Archbishop had told del Torre that his nephew had been married already—secretly, but married—married to the woman who came to seek him out at the camp. Against this wall del Torre's will had been beating in vain before his own betrothal to Dolores was announced. If she *could* not marry Ramon, it might, indeed, be best she married him. But it was with a fierce suspicion he received his friends' congratulations at his club and camp. Among his officers no other look or accent mingled with an unaffected joy. But in the city, he fancied—he was ever ready to fancy—among the young men, a shade of irony in their congratulations on his happiness. Was he not so old!

Don Ramon heard of it from Jacinta. Jacinta was on the side of the younger man. She looked upon del Torre's gray hairs with fierce eyes. Ramon's liquid voice and peachy lip had fascinated this supple creature of the forest. Don Ramon heard; and his own answer was characteristic.

"The old fool!"

Jacinta nodded impatiently. She asked him for a message back. He took pen and paper and wrote:

"SEÑORITA CONDESA: Thou lovest me. On the morning thou shalt wed Don Sebastian I kill him.

"RAMON DEL TORRE."

He read it over; then he stopped and thought. His first impulse was to boast; his second, to intrigue. He was not all tiger; something of the serpent lay within the handsome youth.

"I will send it this evening," he said to Jacinta. And in the evening this is what he wrote:

"SEÑORITA CONDESA: The Archbishop is my enemy and makes my uncle marry you. Have you confessed to him? Surely, you have loved me? On the day he marries you he shall kill your

"RAMON."

This letter he sent. So he played upon the poor girl's conscience, that as a child she had given him a smile; and bragged even to her that he had had her heart. This was Thursday, March 19, 1812. The marriage was set for the 26th. Ramon went to the club, the

café which served as club to the aristocracy of Carácas, and announced publicly that his uncle was forcing his ward to marry him against his will. The General, when this story was brought to him, winced, but only replied: "My nephew knows I cannot fight him; I must leave my honor to the kind opinion of my friends." This speech was repeated—"to the kindness of my friends;" and that night a dozen young gentlemen called upon the marquis and asked to be permitted to provoke Don Ramon. The General refused it to all, with one wave of his hand. "I marry my ward for family reasons; my nephew must be permitted to make what criticism he chooses."

Don Ramon then announced his uncle a coward, and promised to prevent the marriage by force. Del Torre took no notice. Jacinta had taken the letter to Dolores, but Ramon got no reply. After his last threat, however, he received a call from a Jesuit priest, who was sent by the Archbishop and hinted of the Inquisition. Then the young man was silent for two days, and in devouring his rage he produced this letter to Dolores:

"DOLORES: Hast thou confessed? And why no answer to me?

"For death (*para la muerte*),

"RAMON."

To this Jacinta brought back a line:

"I shall confess upon my wedding-day. My answer to my husband, with the message that your Honour" (V., only, in Spanish) "did not give.

"DOLORES, CONDESA DE LUNA."

For Ramon had never given the message that went with the rose.

All this was in Holy Week. Palm Sunday passed; the Wednesday came; Holy Thursday was the day fixed for the wedding—by the Archbishop's special will.

Now, it must be remembered that in all this time del Torre had spoken with Dolores face to face three times, and three times only. Each time he had seen her he had mentioned his nephew's name, and each time she had changed color. He would have married her to Don Ramon could he have done so; even now he had dared but for Ramon's

own conduct. But all this time del Torre was in an agony of doubt, through which even Ramon's insults could not penetrate. He would have sent Dolores to a convent, but the archbishop forbade it; the priest feared not Don Ramon against Don Sebastian; perhaps, however, he feared him at the convent doors. But all this time del Torre had seen Dolores twice a day, at mass, where he went and gazed upon her, dim through incense.

IX.

ON Wednesday morning the Marquis del Torre had a last interview with his bride. She was to go to her last maidenly confession on that day; and he called early in the morning, in his uniform as General of the Liberal army. When he came upon her she was all in white and girt about with pearls. Pearls were in her dark hair, pearls in the folds of her white dress, pearls in her neck, no other color about her save the magic amethystine in her eyes. Her face was pale.

Del Torre bowed over her hand, then stood beside her. After the greeting, he said:

"Señorita Dolores, I am still your guardian —I would only marry you to make you happy. Do you think I can?" His lips were paler than hers, and his voice sounded cold. She only answered:

"Quite sure, señor."

"And the rose I saw you give my nephew —is it dead?"

Again the rush of color to her face; but, after a start, she answered, "It is dead." She stammered slightly, trying to say more; to relieve her embarrassment he rose and left her. "Hasta mañaña!"

"Mañaña por la mañaña," she answered, forcing brightness in her voice. The marquis went out into the sunlight; he felt his heart as cold as hers.

But again Dolores burst into tears; then, quickly drying them, she wrote a letter and sealed it. Then she called Jacinta.

The Indian nurse came quickly, and as she stood looking at Dolores a dog's love was in her eyes. "This letter—the marquis must have it in the morning," said the countess.

"He shall have it—in the morning," answered Jacinta. Then Dolores went to her confessor. And Jacinta could not read the letter; so she took it to Don Ramon first, and asked him what it was. And it was Don Ramon read it, Jacinta looking on.

Then Ramon girt his sword about him, and went to mass.

X.

THE soldiers in Carácas march to mass and the service is performed at beat of drum. At the muffled tap of a march the regiment files in to fill the nave, and kneels, ringing their bayonets upon the stones; the people fill the sides, and stand behind the columns on the aisles. The General was there, as usual, but he could not see Dolores; she was kneeling at a shrine upon one side, a shrine of Mary, Mother of Pity. All the pictures and gold images were heavily draped in crape, for it was Holy Week. The brazen trumpets of the military band sounded through the Kyrie Eleison; the church was dark, for every woman was in black until Good Friday, and the crape hangings shrouded close the walls. Del Torre stood erect in his green uniform, but, save for his figure, the nave was a mass of red and gold and glittering steel. He looked for her; he looked back to the doors

which were thrown back inward; from the dark, shrouded church he looked through into the empty square, blazing with the zenith sun of the equinox. Again a muffled drum-beat, and the regiment knelt, with a rattle of their bayonets, upon the stones; it was the elevation of the host, and he, too, knelt and crossed himself.

When mass was over, the soldiers filed out first; as del Torre followed, he met the wounded captain again, with bloodless cheeks. "You are too pale to be out, sir," said the General, almost lovingly, his hand resting lightly on the other's shoulder.

"Don Ramon is outside," he answered.

"I have no fear—the youth is mad," said del Torre.

It is the custom in Spanish America, now forgotten in old Spain, to lead the holy images of the church about the streets, with a slow processional, before Good Friday. As del Torre spoke, they found themselves behind one of these. In this Church of Santa Teresia is a famed old image of Christ bearing the Cross, brought two centuries before from Spain. It is especially venerated by the merchants of Carácas; large sums are sub-

scribed by them each Easter time to dress it up, thousands of dollars and doubloons. Behind this image now they found themselves. Eight chanting priests, in mourning black and lilac, bore it on either side, but the image was gay with beaten gold, borne in a canopy of costly lace, a hundred tall wax candles giving light. The priests move very slowly, scarce a step a minute, making stations at each shrine, so that to bear these images from one church to another may take half a day. Del Torre and the wounded officer could not, of course, pass it; so that it was half an hour when they reached the open air, and the square nearly emptied of the worshippers; del Torre heard the distant band of the army down the mountain slope.

As they came out into the heat, he felt a slight shudder, like a quiver of the earth, and thought it was the shock of seeing his nephew. Don Ramon del Torre spoke loudly, disregarding the presence of the bystanders, pressing rudely by the sacred shrine, and crying that the old man would not fight.

"There stands the old man that will wed my cousin."

"Mention not her name," said General del Torre——

"I would kill him first, but that his old blood dare not spill itself for her."

"Mention not her name," said del Torre——. Then Ramon's voice hissed louder.

"My cousin Dolores de Luna that has been my mistress——"

That night a Jesuit priest, leaving the King's House, where he had confessed Dolores, ran hastily to the Archbishop's. While he was there, another frightened messenger brought the news that Don Sebastian and his nephew had been fighting on Calvareo. But Jacinta, crying, brought the news to the Countess earlier, how Don Sebastian and Don Ramon at last had met, and how the nephew lay full of wounds upon the Calvary, literally cut in pieces, killed at his own uncle's hands.

XI.

DOLORES spent the night before the wedding kneeling in the little chapel of her dwelling. So we read that Eastern Catholics "lay all that night in the form of a cross." She was praying for her husband that had been to be—perhaps praying that he might be still, praying for light to see if there were sin in it. Perhaps she had remorses of her own. She had known the dead man he had killed as a boy, bold, reckless, wild; I suppose she had looked at him once or twice. A Southern maiden's glances return to torture her when they have led to blood; prudent maids of other climes are chary of them for tradition of some such reason.

Dolores never wept, but knelt there, dry-eyed, praying. In intervals she thought, "Would he be well enough to come?" as she knew that he was gravely wounded; but somehow she felt sure he would; and that if

this marriage-bond were sin, he would venture it for her sake. A woman's conscience rules her heart, even in Spain; but a man, even Roman Catholic, will risk his own perdition to save her sorrow, or that no sin be hers. She must save him, she must be the judge. And sunrise found her pale but decided. Then she called Jacinta to her side, and asked her if she had carried to her husband (so she called him) her note.

Jacinta looked at her fiercely; but at the word "Husband," started. Then she said she had torn it up.

At the Countess's look she quailed, and lied again. She had it still, she said. Dolores bade her give it to him as he came from early mass.

Then Jacinta cried and told the truth. She admitted that she had given it to Don Ramon.

Dolores heard this with the blood about her heart, but sat there silent, while the Indian woman grovelled at her feet. It was her note, then, that caused the duel.

Then mine, too, is the sin, she thought, not his alone; and this thought gave her joy. But where was he? was he strong enough to

come? She took her writing-case and wrote an exact copy of her other note; and this was what she had said, and Ramon had read, and then had fought his uncle:

"SEÑOR: The rose you asked of yesterday I gave Don Ramon; but the message that went with it was given him for you.

"MARIA JOSEPHA DOLORES, CONDESA DE "LUNA."

As she finished writing, the General was announced. His face was bloodless, but his wounds had been carefully dressed, so that the bandages could not be seen. He knelt over her hand, though the kneeling set them bleeding once again. But Dolores, timid only in her love, still saw but remorse and duty in his eyes. With him he brought his own priest, a priest from the Liberal army. "Pobra," he said, "we must be married early —early and privately."

She sought his eyes timidly and tried to say it; to say what words her note said in her hand. But she could not. She could only say, "I know—I have heard," and she clenched the letter closer in her hand. She could not give it to him.

Del Torre's face could not turn whiter. But he said: "Forgive me—only your forgiveness I can ask. At noon, then?"

"At noon." She saw him leave the house; then, then she turned and cried to Jacinta: "Run, run, and give him this letter—at the Cathedral."

And again, upon her wedding-morning, Dolores went to pray. She was interrupted by a visit from the Archbishop. Some presentiment made her rise in apprehension; and as she stood erect, she saw, through the priest, the man. And she saw that he, too, had her secret; first the lover, then the priest, had found it out.

"This marriage must not be," said he.

"Holy Father, I have confessed yesterday."

"This marriage must not be. You loved Don Ramon."

Dolores's lips curled. "I confessed, yesterday. I see you have been told."

"Yesterday 'twas a duty—to-day it is a sin. Thou lovest Ramon."

Then Dolores rose to her full height and her blue eyes flamed like ice. "Sebastian, the Liberador, him I love, in this life and the next; God knows it, and Ramon knows it,

and now may you, and soon, please God, shall he!"

All forewarned that he was, the priest started at her vehemence. Fool that he had been!

"He has murdered his nephew—and thou art the cause."

The Countess was silent. All Catholic that she was, she had resolved to appeal from his judgment to God's.

"Thou wilt not obey?" said the priest.

Her lips half formed the word no.

"Then on thee and on him, on thy house I pronounce the curse of God. Thy family shall have cause to remember this day, this Holy Thursday, until it and both thy names shall have vanished from the earth."

Scarcely had the Archbishop left the house when del Torre came. She saw that he had not been to church. But she was married to him without another word. "If he has not my note," she thought, "he shall have it soon."

But before that night Jacinta, with the note in her hand, was buried with ten thousand others behind the closed cathedral doors.

XII.

ON this Thursday, March 26, 1812, while the services of the Hours of Agony were being celebrated in the great cathedral, in the presence of ten thousand people, the mountains trembled and the earth opened. The multitude pressed for the doors, but they opened inward, and the thronging masses pressed them fast. At the second shock the walls opened and the roof fell in. The Archbishop and many priests were buried at the altar. Thirty thousand people are said to have perished. Many were swallowed in the chasm that opened on the mountain-side, like rents in a bulging sail bursted in a gale. No stone houses in Carácas more than one-story high was standing on that night—except the old Spanish castle where, in the tower-room, Dolores sat watching for her husband.

Through all that night del Torre worked

amid the ruins. At dawn he was brought home insensible, fainting from his labors, bleeding at his opened wounds. Dolores met him at the door, and led the bearers to the room that should have been their bridal-room. There he was laid, and lay delirious many weeks with fever. Dolores never left his side.

The Archbishop was known to have been killed. Jacinta, the bride knew, must have perished too. The priest that had married them stayed with her; but Dolores, though brave enough to sin, was not false to her faith. The over-wrought heart of the poor girl and great noblewoman connected all that had happened with what she deemed her sins—firstly, that she had caused her cousin's death, her husband's crime, but chiefly that she had braved the Church, and the curse its head, now dead, had launched upon her and upon Carácas. That their house alone was standing seemed only to mark them guilty.

Dolores was a noble heart, and did not falter in her course. She had followed love, she had married him she loved; his wife she was, his wife she would remain. But she

sought no soothing palliation from the friendly priest. She went to no confession; in all her life she never would confess herself, seek absolution again. Excommunicated she would live, that the curse might rest on her and not on him.

But ah, how ardently she watched for Sebastian's consciousness to come! for his eyes to rest on hers again! She felt sure the coldness in them now was gone. Delirious, he raved of her and of his love; he that never called her but by titles in his life, now cried Dolores, Dolores, and she held his hand and waited.

She bade the doctors tell her when his recovery was likely to come. And then, when one evening his hands moved, and he closed his eyes and slept, she sat there trembling, not daring to be beside him, but her face turned away. That yearning cry—Dolores, Dolores, had been stilled for hours; but the night passed and still he was asleep. Then, when it was broad sunlight, she heard a sudden movement by the nurse, and the priest began to pray in Latin, and her heart stood still. He sat up; she retreated in the shadow, toward the door. His voice spoke;

but oh! how low, how weak—not as it had been in his dreaming; alas! this was now his right mind. He saw not her; his eyes looked sanely out the window, through the crowded city. "It was a sin to marry her," he said.

She was carried fainting to her room within the tower, and there again she waited. "Has he asked for me?" she ventured to ask, at night.

He had asked for my lady, and they told him she was ill. And the next day again; and they had told him she was in her suite about the tower. She dared not seek him now. And flowers came to her from him, but no further speech. Thrice he sent his homage to her. He could not walk yet, but he sent his homage to her. She asked to know when he could walk; and they told her they would let her know. So, one afternoon, they told her he might walk the next day; and all that night she passed in prayer.

The next day she waited for his step upon the stone floor. It came not; to her tears and prayers, it came not. Jacinta's dead hand still held close the note. She prayed—was it wrong to pray when so unshrived?—

to Maria Vergen de las Mercedes, but still it came not. Her haughty Spanish breeding forbade her showing sorrow to her servants, and they were cold and deferential to her. Jacinta? She was dead—Dolores knew, but thought that she had given him her letter. She had sinned, yes, but he was her husband.

The next day she asked the servant. The Señor General was gone. Gone? without seeing her even? He had had to go to the wars; he had not ventured to disturb my lady; he left a letter. A letter? she tore it open, read it. It sent his respectful worship to "the Marquesa;" it apologized for his illness; it prayed forgiveness from her for having married her; it was done to save her name. It said no word of love; and Sebastian Ruy del Torre was a gentleman: his love appeared not in his letter. If she loved him not, he would not wound her by showing his. It said no word of guilt. He would neither wound her by requiring love nor by suggesting blame; but to Dolores's morbid fancy it had a sense of blame. It closed by speaking of his duty at the wars; of his country's freedom; perhaps, a hint of hers. Dolores clasped the white paper to her

breast, and, to immortal eyes its color was of blood. She read it once again; and del Torre, had he been there, could have seen her heart die in her eyes.

XIII.

WE must remember that Maria Josepha Dolores, Condesa del Torre y Luna, was a lonely young girl, educated but from books, devoutedly believing in a faith we like to think superstitious. Remember, please, also, that she loved, and braved her Church for love, and had not, so she thought, won his. She deemed her soul was damned; she knew her heart was broken. Not that there were no days when she did dare hope; no days in which she tried to frame a theory by which it still might seem he cared for her; but she believed he was borne down by their great guilt. And she resolved his soul, at least, would not be lost for hers. "My lady Marquesa would have her apartments in all the house," the letter said. "My lady had but to command. A small room in the tower was enough for him—he could but rarely be home from the wars. He trusted, if his pres-

ence was painful, she would not see him," etc., etc. And, after many months, when the General came back—his wife met him not. The rooms of state were carefully prepared for him, and all his suite; flowers, banquets were ready; all his retinue and hers, in their joint blazonry, were in attendance. Only, strangely enough, just that little tower-room was the one my lady Marchioness preferred. Would he kindly yield it to her?

Of course, and the General sent her a rope of pearls. They almost broke her resolution; but she met him not. The General only sighed; this was all as he had known. The evil nephew, done to death by his own hand, still had her heart. He sighed and his hair grew whiter. One rending memory came over him, of the last time he had seen her eyes.

He could not know, as he rode homeward up the street, after his first state visits, straining his eyes up to that tower-window frowning so blankly, how late her own had left it—those eyes of purple-gray that every beggar in Carácas soon knew well, save only he. Before the next return his glory blazed abroad, and Bolivar came back with him. Bolivar, the Liberator. All thoughtful prep-

aration, all courtly care, all a Spanish grandee's splendor was spread forth to receive him in the Casa Rey; but the châtelaine was never seen. It was not necessary to explain her absence; such things get quickly known; it was, of course, thought she had loved the cousin. And the strange Old-world Gothic pride made her bearing, the honor of the house, del Torre's silence, only too easily intelligible to them. So the Marquis del Torre never saw his bride on his returning home.

But, had he known it, he never opened a door that she had not vanished through it. He never touched a flower she had not placed for him. He never looked in a mirror her gray eyes had not just left. He never touched a wine-glass to his lips that her lips had not kissed it. The very missal that he read from had been warmed within her bosom.

O, ghosts, and mediums, and vulgar spirits of air! and stupid tables, mirrors that are flattered with tales of second sight! Why did you not hold a look of hers one moment longer? why did not the roses keep a second longer her lips' breath for him? Poor fa-

bles of visions in the air, that could not draw the image of her eyes to his as he rode up the street scarce a hundred mortal bodies' breadths away! But they never did; he never saw her, she saw him only as he rode away upon his horse; and so for many—nay, not many (such poor slight power has heaven)—not for many, years. And as his horse bore him away, she came to the tower-window and watched him go—and there she sat weeks, months, until the pennons flashed or the trumpet's note announced to her, waiting, that he was come again. For he always came in such guise, announced with ceremony. And he did not dream her eyes had been at the tower-window ever since. For their eyes never met.

But the people knew, and so they called her "Our Lady of the Tower." And Nuestra Doña del Torre is she called there still. And thus they lived there alone within that great house, each for pity of the other in courage, each for awe of love in silence; each so loving, so brave, so silent, that the other never knew.

XIV.

"NUESTRA DOÑA DEL TORRE"—by that title, I fancy, she is known in heaven. For in that city all the good that was worked was hers; after the earthquake, then through siege and civil war, her heart directed her handmaidens, ladies loving her did her soft work. Her own life was but a gentle message. For she never but for the convent left her tower-room. Thither, however, poor old men, children, troubled girls, would come to see her.

All this time Bolivar was battling with the might of Spain, and del Torre (del Torre y Luna now he always called himself, liking, at least, to link his name with hers; but she had dropped her own name and called herself del Torre alone — Maria Dolores del Torre) was Bolivar's captain. Years the war lasted. Once our General was captured in the city; he came to Carácas at a time of

war, when it was legal for the Governor to capture him; he had heard some rumor that his wife was ill. He would have been shot but that he escaped from gaol, and this so easily that the prison doors seemed to turn of themselves. No youth, or woman, or child in all Carácas but would have turned a traitor for our lady.

Del Torre's face looked old—Dolores knew it not. She never saw him—except, perhaps, a distant figure on a horse. When he was out, she roamed the house; when he came back she shut herself within her apartments. He never returned, from the shortest absences, a walk or a mass, without making formal announcement. He wondered only at the flowers; the perfections of his banquets, the splendor of his household, were for his guest and as it should be. At first del Torre had hoped to see at least a handkerchief fly from her window, a greeting or a wave of the hand, on his return. But it was always black and blank when he saw it. At first, this cost him tears: a greeting seemed so little—only courtesy! But afterward he only sighed; no man should repine that events fulfil his expectations rather than his hopes.

Their money grew apace. With part of hers Dolores built a church at Los Teques, a property that had been her mother's, not far from the city. Half her time she spent there; and it stands there still, and is called after the Vergen de las Mercedes—Our Lady of Pity—to whom alone Dolores dared to pray. But the Church took her treasure and it kept her secret. Sometimes, in God's providence, even pity is withheld.

One's heart beats quick to think what might have happened had she ventured to confession—the priest who married them still was with her, in the household, an honest priest, who loved del Torre, too. But Rome, which knows how to be gentle as a mother, can also be as cruel as the grave. So Dolores went on in building churches, and Don Sebastian offered his brave heart wherever he saw a bullet fly for liberty. The best work of the world is done by broken hearts.

One time that he came home, he found a medallion by his plate. It was set with pearls, in tricolor enamel. He opened it, and it was a miniature of her. Then once a rush of human blood bore all his barriers of honor, duty, resolves of conduct, far away. He

hastened through the house to the tower, where she lived. He hastened—crying Dolores, Dolores, as he had cried in his delirium. Her maid opened—not Jacinta, but Jacinta's daughter, now a woman. My Lady Marquesa had gone to the convent at Los Teques for some weeks' prayer.

XV.

AFTER this, del Torre's body grew broken, with his heart.

It was the last campaign of liberation. The final battle was fought not far from Los Teques, where the convent was; and the wall of the church of the Vergen de las Mercedes was scarred with balls. The fight was over, the country was free. And the General at last was killed.

Bolivar himself went with del Torre's body to Carácas; our General's *corps d'armée* were his pall-bearers. The news, of course, had been sent to the city; the Governor had fled; the General's tri-color now, the red-white-green of Colombia, was floating over the Capitol. All the town was gay with banners, merry with song. It had forgotten the earthquake, and was now rebuilt, though lower down. The Casa Rey now stood at the

head of the principal street, which sloped from it down the mountain side. And as the regiment escorting his body debouched into this avenue and turned upward (as its dead leader had so often done before), and the town came in view, there was a great hush upon the people. For lo! Now, at last, the window of the tower was wide open and the house bore all no black, but was festooned with laughing tri-color. And the window of the tower was open, and there within stood our Lady Dolores, in her white wedding laces, waving her hand.

She met them at the great door. Bolivar, and the officers who had been with our General, started. For, as she stood there in her slender satin gown, her eyes upon them, she was like a young girl. And her girlish waist was bound about with pearls.

The fact was, she was seven-and-twenty. They placed his bier first in the great room; but she would have it in hers, so in the tower-room they placed it, with burning candles standing sentry now where she had stood; and by its side were lilies—the flower of the Holy Ghost—and then they left her. Then first, since her wedding-day, she looked

upon him, face to face, his eyes now dead to see. Their eyes so met. And outside, from the city now again joyous, came the carillon of freedom bells.

XVI.

THIS is the life story of Don Sebastian Ruy José Maria, Marques del Torre y Luna; and of Maria Josepha Dolores del Torre, Condesa de Luna, his wife; and of the old stone castle that alone the earthquake left standing in the pleasant city of Carácas.

The Holy Catholic Church had alone their secret; and she kept it; and now she has, laid up on earth, their treasure too. No longer such grim motives vex their country; if she battles with herself, it is for money or for acres of wide coffee land. Such cruel tales cannot be found there now. But, perhaps, withal, some touch of noble life is vanished, with that flag of blood and gold. Good cannot grow bravely without evil in this world.

You may see the Casa Rey still standing in the sombre street, and the empty tower window there. The Marquesa del Torre y

Luna died, quite old, more than a score of years ago. Her blue eyes are no longer there. Perhaps they are in heaven, and now at last, "know not their love from God." The people of Carácas think so. Her eyes

> "Even than on this earth tenderer—
> While hopes and aims long lost with her,
> Stand round her image side by side,
> Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
> About the Holy Sepulchre."